1352

NARRATIVE

OF

A PEDESTRIAN JOURNEY

THROUGH

RUSSIA AND SIBERIAN TARTARY,

FROM THE

FRONTIERS OF CHINA

TO THE

FROZEN SEA AND KAMTCHATKA;

PERFORMED DURING THE YEARS

1820, 1821, 1822, AND 1823,

BY

CAPT. JOHN DUNDAS COCHRANE, R.N.

THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARASWATI MAHAL

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1824.

TO

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

VISCOUNT MELVILLE, K.T.

FIRST LORD OF THE ADMIRALTY,

ETC.

1352

MY LORD,

When I determined upon committing to the press the following Narrative of my Journey through Siberia and Tartary, I felt a desire that I might be permitted to dedicate the same to your Lordship.

For the kind and handsome manner in which your Lordship was pleased to comply with my request, permit me to hope that your Lordship may derive a few hours of amusement from the perusal of the work; and should this wish fortunately be accomplished, I shall not consider my time to have been uselessly employed. I have the honor to be, with all respect,

MY LORD,

YOUR OBLIGED AND FAITHFUL SERVANT,

JOHN DUNDAS COCHRANE.

PREFACE.

It has not been the kind partiality of my friends, the common apology for an uninteresting or ill written book, which has induced me to launch upon the world the following narrative of my journey to the utmost northern and eastern limits of the Russian empire; nor has it arisen from a vain idea of my being qualified for a task of the kind. No person (except the foreign nobleman under whose especial countenance the principal part of the undertaking was accomplished) has recommended such a proceeding. The publication, therefore, whether of merit or demerit, is entirely prompted by the novelty of the journey, and of the mode of accomplishing it; for, even in these days of wonderful achievements, it has excited some surprise that a Captain of the British Navy should undertake a journey of many thousands of miles, alone, on foot, and over a country considered as next to impassable. That the journey has only in part been performed on foot, is to be attributed to the liberality of the Russian government, as well

as to the hospitality of its people. Had the Emperor Alexander, however, refused the assistance I solicited, required, and obtained, I am free to declare that it is next to impossible to traverse his Empire on foot. I fairly made the experiment. For a long time I adopted that economical mode of travelling, until the pressing solicitations of every one convinced me it would be folly to decline any longer the acceptance of such offers as they were pleased, from real benevolence, to make me.

I frequently walked, and as frequently rode, and was thus enabled to go over a vast extent of country in a short time; and such is the kind disposition of the Russian character towards a stranger, as evinced in my case, that I feel convinced that, by studying their manners and customs, partaking of their amusements, shewing respect to their religion, and otherwise conforming to their rude notions, the Empire of Russia may be traversed by a foreigner in every direction, with much convenience, plenty of food, good lodgings, and even suitable raiment, without molestation, and this for so inconsiderable a sum, that to name it were to challenge disbelief. I shall, therefore, only state that the expenses of my journey from Moscow to Irkutsk (by the route I went six thousand miles), certainly fell short of *a guinea.*

Such being the case, such being the novelty of the journey, such being our ignorance of Siberia,

and every thing connected with the public institutions of that distant part of the world, I consider it my duty, as well as my interest, to submit to the candour of an indulgent public the following pages. Effectually to disarm the critic, I need only say that I entered into the cockpit of a man of war at the very early age of *ten*: if that be not sufficient, let the fact of a journey of more than thirty thousand miles, performed under peculiar circumstances, be taken as a set-off against a want of powers better fitting an author than a traveller.

I cannot, however, but entertain a hope that the narrative will be found not void of interest. It contains no alterations from the original notes, it has simply been lopped of those branches which could not interest the English reader; probably, it has not even yet been sufficiently pruned, for I fear I have still left marks of having pried into proceedings which may appear not to have come within my province. When my readers, however, consider the peculiar situation in which I was placed for more than three years, I hope they will give me credit for the impartiality of my opinions, and the truth of my statements. Respecting the character of the Russians, I do not feel myself competent to give what may be termed a proper description. I might be charged with a want of impartiality, and therefore prefer that my readers should form their own estimate, after a due consideration of the facts stated in my Narrative. The

variety of conflicting testimonies has rendered the task still more difficult: some who have written upon the subject have grossly exaggerated, while others have advanced assertions totally unfounded. Thus much, however, I will take upon myself to say, that no people have made more rapid strides towards civilisation, moral and intellectual improvements, than all classes of the Russians, and further I say, that their catalogue of failings, for they do not merit the appellation of crimes, by no means exceeds those of other countries.

There is another ground on which I would fain persuade myself that these pages may be productive of some good; may they not prove the means of stirring up the enterprising spirit of those who have better means and greater talents than I pretend to? Should a traveller who has the pecuniary means, the requisite talents, and the spirit and perseverance indispensable, enter upon the vast fields of Tartary, he will find ample scope for the exercise of his genius, whether he be a philosopher, a botanist, a naturalist, or an historian. For myself, I profess only to have acted in the capacity of a rough pioneer, and having cleared the way, leave the road open for the scientific, to pursue his journey when it best suits him.

To the impatient mind these pages may also afford a salutary lesson. Should such a character peruse this narrative, and trace me through a long, laborious, and highly perilous journey, contrasting

the frequent miserable situations in which I have been placed, with his comparatively happy one, he will, I trust, learn "to be content": he will also learn that there are few difficulties which patience and spirit may not overcome, and that man may fearlessly go where he will, so long as his conduct answers to his movements.

I may be allowed to add, that after such a journey, I might be supposed cured of the spirit of travelling, at least in so eccentric a way; yet the supposition is far from the fact, for as I am conscious that *I was never so happy as in the wilds of Tartary*, so have I never been so anxious to enter on a similar field as at this moment.

THE AUTHOR.

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Map of the Country between
St. PETERSBURG and BEHRING'S STRAIT.
shewing the route performed by
J. COCHRANE.
FROZEN OCEAN
WHITE SEA
NOVA ZEMLIA
Sea of Kama
GULF OF BOTHNIA
North Cape
St. PETERSBURG
MOSCOW
Archangel
Kazan
TOBOLSK
Tomsk
Irkutsk
Baikal Lake
Yakutsk
Okotsk
SEA OF OKOTSK
SAMOIEDS
TUNGOUSI
KARAGHIRI
COUNTRY OF THE TCHUKTCHI
GULF OF ANADYR
BEHRING'S STRAIT
N. AMERICA
New Siberia
Mouths of the Lena
CHINESE EMPIRE
KIRGEESE
CASPIAN SEA
ARAL SEA
Kurile Islands
GULF OF TARTARY
Sagaleen Oula
Port St. Peter & St. Paul
East of Greenwich
West of Greenwich
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NARRATIVE,

ETC.

CHAPTER I.

Motives for undertaking the Journey—Dieppe—Rouen—Paris—La Ferté—Chalons—St. Dizier—Nancy—Metz—Sarrebruck — Landshut — Kaisers Lautern — Frankfort—Schlucten—Fuld—Erfurth—Leipsic—Dueben—Potsdam—Berlin.

In the month of January, 1820, I addressed a letter to the Secretary of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, offering to undertake a journey into the interior of Africa, which should have for its object the ascertaining of the course and termination of the river Niger. Besides the bent of my own inclination, I had an inducement to this step in the conviction established by experience, of my capability to encounter the ordinary difficulties of a pedestrian traveller: having, on the conclusion of the general peace, traversed on foot the beautiful countries of France, Spain and Portugal—an excursion in which I certainly underwent a full proportion of fatigue and privations.

The plan I purposed to follow was nearly that adopted by Mungo Park in his first journey; intending to proceed alone, and requiring only to be furnished with the countenance of some constituent part of the government. With this protection, and such recommendations as it might procure me, I would have accompanied the caravans in some servile capacity, nor hesitated even to sell myself as a slave, if that miserable alternative were necessary, to accomplish the object I had in view.

In going alone, I relied upon my own individual exertions and knowledge of man, unfettered by the frailties and misconduct of others. I was then, as now, convinced, that many people travelling together for the purpose of exploring a barbarous country, have the less chance of succeeding, more especially when they go armed, and take with them presents of value. The appearance of numbers must naturally excite the natives to resistance from motives of jealousy or fear; and the danger would be greatly increased by the hope of plunder. The death of the whole party, and consequently the failure of the expedition, will be the probable result of such a plan. The difficulty of finding men, otherwise suitable, whose constitutions admit an equal degree of suffering and fatigue, is also great: and that of collecting a number of people gifted with the due portion of those virtues without which no expedition of discovery could succeed,—is certainly a greater.

My answer from the Admiralty was unfavourable, expressing an unwillingness to countenance the undertaking; whether from tender regard to the safety of my person, or because they considered such an expedition foreign to their department, or from what other reason, I shall leave the reader to conjecture. I was not however the less convinced of the practicability of my plan: but finding that a young commander like myself was not likely to be employed afloat, I determined to undertake a journey, varying only the object and the scene to that of the unfortunate Ledyard, viz. to travel round the globe, as nearly as can be done by land, crossing from Northern Asia to America, at Behring's Streights; I also determined to perform the journey on foot, for the best of all possible reasons, that my finances allowed of no other. I accordingly procured two years' leave of absence, and prepared to traverse the continents of Europe, Asia, and America.

It is only candid to premise, that the account I am about to give of my travels can but little gratify the scientific reader. I confess my ignorance of natural history, nor had I been ever so skilful could I, travelling on foot, have brought away with me any specimens of animals, plants, or minerals. I had no means of carrying with me such instruments as are necessary for making geographical observations of places, of the state of

the air, or such other matters as are generally expected to be noted by travellers: the few instruments I did possess were taken from me, as will hereafter appear.

My first and leading object was to trace the shores of the Polar Sea along America, by land, as Captain Parry is now attempting to do by sea; and at the same time to note my observations on men and manners in the various situations and conditions of life; for which such a journey could not fail of presenting many opportunities. Having therefore procured such documents as were necessary, and filled my knapsack with such articles as I considered requisite to enable me to wander through the wilds, deserts, and forests of three quarters of the globe, I quitted London and landed at Dieppe from the packet-boat.

My regret on quitting the shores of Albion was not likely to be counterbalanced by any pleasurable reflections on reaching those of France; but having been forty hours on board the packet, with little or nothing to eat, I cheerfully submitted to the ordeal of the French searchers, at the modest price of a franc; and, with my knapsack on my back, walked on to one of those most accommodating of all places of entertainment, announced by the simple words of "logement à pied ou à cheval." I there procured a bed and supper for the same reasonable price that I had paid for the

honour done me in the official examination of my precious wallet.

Being reluctant to incur the expense of five francs, to obtain my passport on Sunday, I was content to devote the day to celebrate the eve of my birth-day, of the Carnival, and of St. Valentine; having visited what may be deemed most worthy in the pretty, clean, and well paved town of Dieppe,—the retreat for the vicious, and refuge for the unfortunate.

Monday, 14th February, I commenced my route towards Paris, over a well cultivated, but thinly peopled country, on which are a few pleasant country seats, and neat villages, with a road far superior to that from the capital to Calais. I contemplated, as I jogged along, some of the differences between France and Spain, comparing the facilities of traversing the former, to the difficulties and dangers attending the latter; and contrasting the servile, frivolous, and seductive Frenchman, with the noble, proud, and hospitable Don. Nor is the scenery of the two countries less opposed: the bold, romantic, fertile, and mountainous features of Spain, to the long, low, sloping declivities, and the tame, though cultivated eminences of France.

About a mile, however, from Rouen, the prospect became more interesting. To the right and in front, wound the silvery Seine, its bosom studded with vessels to a degree extraordinary at this season of the year. In the distance, in front and

to the left, stood the city of Rouen, with the spire of its truly venerable cathedral, and other steeples and public buildings, rising over various parts of the city: while, farther to the left, a range of hills, in a high state of cultivation, sloped down to a number of handsome chateaux and pretty cottages ; while the lawns, covered with cottons and linens spread out to bleach, gave an air of cheerful and honourable industry to this portion of the Department of Lower Seine.

I put up at a table d'hôte, and, for three francs a-day, procured the opportunity of viewing the wonders of the ancient, but dirty, narrow, and crooked streeted city of Rouen. The cathedral is, of course, the first object of attraction; but, however beautiful its Gothic design, or however excellent its modern improvements, the effect of both is lost from the peculiar unfriendliness of its situation; surrounded on three sides, by dirty lanes, so close that the backs of some of the houses are formed by the walls of the cathedral. The interior corresponds with the exterior in point of decoration; though of its furniture little else is to be seen beside enormous piles of old chairs. I left this once so beautiful, but now disfigured edifice, to wander through the aisles of St. Owen, a fine and perfect Gothic specimen, whose grandly elevated roof, and highly finished painted windows, seem capable of inspiring a religious feeling far beyond those of the cathedral. The Archiepiscopal pa-

lace, the barracks on the banks of the Seine, a large Gothic building, converted to public offices, and the Hotel de Ville, are also deserving attention. Rouen has a tolerable library, and a cabinet of paintings, including numerous pieces of the old school; their description is too much out of my sphere, to be entered upon: and were it otherwise, the indelicacy of some of them might well forbid their reception by an English public.

Ascending Mount St. Catherine, I now overlooked the river and great part of the surrounding country, which, even at this season of the year, presented an interesting scene, where the boulevards, by far the cleanest part, stretch along three sides of the city to a great distance, with the cathedral and other churches: the beautiful windings of the river, now bounded by high and chalky cliffs, and then by low meadow lands, with its numerous inhabited and well cultivated islands, reminding me of the "Chinampas, or floating gardens of Mexico."

Mount St. Catherine had some time back a strong fortress; though now scarcely the vestige of a wall remains. Possibly it was destroyed on purpose, as palpably unnecessary to the protection of the *sacred territory*. The communication across the river is formed by a heavy bridge of boats fastened together in the most unskilful manner, the beams of wood admitting of little or no play, so necessary during the breaking up of the ice, or the

freshes and swellings of the river. The *great nation* might obtain some useful information on floating bridges from Oporto or Seville.

I returned to the city, in time to witness what little public feeling was exhibited on the information just received of the Duke de Berri's assassination, and having gallantly paid my devoirs to the statue of the Maid of Orleans, departed, convinced that Rouen, like other great cities, presents too much to be seen, and too little to interest.

The first part of the journey from Rouen to Paris, is on the banks of the Seine, then under Mount St. Catherine, and afterwards over a considerably elevated ground. Cultivation is here pursued on an extensive scale, but the scene is uninteresting from its sameness, and the total absence of inclosures, recalling to the English traveller the superior beauties of his own country. Passing a few dirty villages, you reach Bordeaux de Vigné a Magni, a considerable town, distant twenty-eight miles. From hence to Paris is a well paved road, through the ancient town of Entreuil: the country here becomes more interesting and better peopled, though it has little else to denote its proximity to the second capital of Europe. I arrived late, and put up at the Hotel de Conte.

I remained at Paris several days waiting for my passports, for which no less than seven signatures and as many francs were required. I was happy enough to find a worthy friend in the person of the

late Colonel Mercer, who, with his amiable daughters, did every thing possible to lessen the expense, and ennui of the delay. All public amusements were however prohibited for a certain period, in consequence of the Duke de Berri's death, much, I suspect, to the mortification of the Parisians, who, whatever be their love to the *grand monarque*, appear but little attached to his august family.

Paris has ever appeared to me dull, probably from my want of means to enter its vortex of dissipation; but as I was not wholly insensible to the wish, I resolved immediately to quit it, leaving to others the task of describing over again what has so often been described. I set out therefore on the 20th, with the intention of crossing the Rhine at Frankfort, taking Nancy on the road. Twenty-two miles on my route, lay the episcopal city of Meaux, whose cathedral is certainly deserving of notice, in as much as its exterior is completely finished, a rare case with French cathedrals. The country about it is low, and as uninteresting as the city itself. Passed the night at La Ferté sous Jouarre, a considerable town on the Marne, celebrated for its trade in mill-stones, which are thence exported in great numbers. I was too fatigued to enjoy more of the comforts of a decent auberge, than that of a bed, such as it was, consisting only of a blanket, with my knapsack for a pillow. Reached Port-a-Binson late the next evening, having gone through several considerable towns, among which

is Chateau Thierry, beautifully situated on both banks of the Marne, connected by two bridges, which are again connected by an island in the centre of the river. The country here assumes a more romantic appearance, and the people seem happier and more good-natured, with less of that forward and impertinent curiosity so characteristic of French manners. At a distance of twenty-four miles, I reached Chalons, in Champaigne. It was not probable I should pass this province without tapping a bottle of so celebrated a wine, which the town of Epernay furnished me for three francs and a half.

Epernay with its scenery is truly romantic, as observed from an elevated situation above Chateau Thierry. It reminded me much of the scenery in the north of Portugal, near the river and bridge of Coa.

Leaving Chalons, I directed my steps towards St. Dizier, over a hilly country. The road was bad, but rendered lighter by the company of some pedestrian travellers. Our route, however, was through a flourishing vineyard and a highly picturesque scenery, abounding with wood and water; but dirty and populous villages every where offended the eye, presenting a strange and paradoxical appearance, as if health and dirt were as congenial in France, as health and cleanliness are in England.

I reached St. Dizier late in the evening, ex-

ceedingly fatigued; put up at a decent public-house, where were plenty of other travellers enjoying the comforts of a Saturday night, when an extra franc is spent. This latter circumstance I mention, that gentlemen travellers (I know not to what classification of the tribe Laurence Sterne would have referred me) may observe that we of humbler habits and pretensions have our red as well as black letter days. St. Dizier is an ancient town, near the navigable part of the Marne, built in the year 951, and is the chief town in the department of the Meuse, lying in a fertile country. Grapes are here abundant, and many beautiful views may be glimpsed through thick groves and vineyards, common to this part of the country. Breakfasted at Bar-sur-Ornain, generally called Bar-le-Duc. The next place in point of rank, in the same department, is Ligny, with a collegiate church and a palace, belonging to the Counts of the same name. Passed through Void and St. Aubin, the former, apparently, a pleasant lively place, containing three thousand inhabitants; thence, through Toul, an ancient bishopric of Lorraine. The country was hilly and fertile, producing abundance of good and tolerably cheap wine.

The following day I spent at Nancy, enjoying the beauties of this Bath of France, and capital of Lorraine. It is still a fine city, although dispossessed of its former privileges and honours. The buildings in general are noble; the Hotel de

Ville superb; the Council House, in the new square, very fine; and the regularity and cleanliness of the streets deserving of praise. The promenades are kept in good order, and every thing denotes that Nancy is a well conducted and highly civilized city. I took the benefit of a warm bath in excellent style for one franc, and next morning departed, taking the road to Metz, and enjoyed one of those delightful walks which seldom fall to the lot even of a traveller, much less to those slaves of ease who get up but to go to rest, and live but to die. The road stretched along the beautiful banks of the Meuse, winding through numerous vallies, betwixt a succession of hills, whose summits assumed the form which sailors would term "table lands." I crossed the river by a well built modern bridge, just at the point where the Meuse falls into the Moselle. The fertility and industry of this part of France are alike apparent: each side of the river was a continuity of vineyard or orchard, the river, winding round the forest-topt hills, branching out at intervals into several streams, and then uniting in a sort of rapid. The numerous towns and villages, every where interspersed, exhibited their influence on the scene, pouring out to their healthful occupations a thick population of robust and cheerful labourers.

On the last day's march I fell in with one of Napoleon's soldiers, who had had the misfortune of being for two years and a half immured in a

Russian prison, if the wilds of Siberian Tartary possess any building which can merit such an appellation. He protested "by his faith and respect for Napoleon;" and if I may judge from what I heard, I must suppose the expression spoke the sentiments of a large portion of the Bourbon subjects. His veracity was indeed questionable, declaring that he had been seven days without food, at Witepsk; and, that out of five hundred and thirty Frenchmen confined in the same prison with himself, but twenty-three remained alive to tell the dreadful tale. It took them, he said, eight months travelling to reach their destination at Tobolsk.

He was, however, a lively and even a serviceable companion, for upon complaining of my feet becoming blistered, he communicated to me as a secret a mode of cure which I have never found to fail. It is simply to rub the feet at going to bed, with spirits mixed with tallow dropped from a lighted candle into the palm of the hand. On the following morning, no blisters will exist; the spirit seems to possess the healing power, the tallow serving only to keep the skin soft and pliant. The soles of the feet, the ancles, and insteps, should be rubbed well; and even where no blisters exist, the application may be usefully made as a preventive. Salt and water is a good substitute; and while on this head, I would recommend foot-travellers never to wear right and left shoes: it is bad economy, and indeed serves to cramp the feet; and such I

felt to be the case as I arrived at Port-a-Marsan, a pretty town, with a good inn and better market. Thence, over a variously cultivated country, I reached the outworks of Metz, situate at the confluence of the Moselle and Seille, two rivers which are nearly carried round the city by the aid of canals, &c.

Metz is a place of great importance and strength, and has frequently endured the horrors of a siege. It is the see of a bishop, whose cathedral, like that of Rouen, is secluded among the habitations of barbers, tailors, and cobblers; like Rouen too, it is but a dirty place. The dwellings of the Israelites are restricted to a particular part of the city: I saw a few of them, with their long beards and black cloaks,—a distinctive dress which they are compelled to appear in.

Next morning, with the sound of the bugle, and at the opening of the gates, I resumed my march, having previously sent my knapsack by the diligence to Frankfort. The day proved fine, which enabled me to reach Sarrebruck, five miles within the barrier of Germany. The scenery was wild and interesting. Many cultivated spots smiled through the immense dark forests; and even on the frontier line, the romantic view combined with the thought of entering a strange country, unknowing and unknown, and ignorant of its language, had nearly overpowered me, until the sight of a neat little public-house, brought me back again to John Bull and his happy home. And although that part

of the world may not bear a comparison with England, still the picture had many points of resemblance. The country was highly cultivated, and inhabited in the manner of straggling farms; and the country inn with its tap, and red-faced landlord, cheering fire, plenty of good beer, tobacco, a smoky room, with boisterous guests, all in high dispute on politics, and keeping up Saturday night, were no bad emblems of England, and, as such, truly acceptable to a cold dispirited traveller.

After a walk of forty miles I supped with some itinerant Jews, upon a genuine German repast, viz. milk soup, fricaseed veal, pancakes, roast joint, with a sausage, called in London, brawn. We had also our dessert, consisting of apples, pears, nuts, and good wine, and with such fare and such company, I was bound to feel happy. Previous to retiring, I could not help remarking the difference in the education of a German and a Frenchman. The frontiers are the very best places to observe it; address a German, however poor or vulgar his condition, upon any subject, and his answer will prove that he has been at least partially educated. Accost a Frenchman in like manner, and you will have for answer, "Monsieur, cela je ne puis pas vous dire," with a shrug of the shoulders, which none but a Frenchman can render equally expressive or ridiculous. Nor does the comparison stop here. The manners of the people, their diet, the economy and cleanliness of their houses, nay,

the modesty of their females—in a word, every thing that renders life agreeable, remind me forcibly, that I am not going to bed in France.

I slept well, and after paying twenty francs for the indorsement of my passport, having neglected to bring the Prussian claw from Paris, I resumed my journey. Three leagues over an uncultivated country, I passed the remains of an old castle and mutilated tower, and entered upon a finer prospect, with the pretty little town of Homburg in the fore-ground, at the foot of a mountainous precipice.

At Homburg, I enjoyed my pipe and supper in company with my German landlord, whose extraordinary deference to my opinion was calculated to make me grow in favour with myself. My next destination was to Kaisers Lautern, over eight leagues of dreary and uninteresting country. Snow fell in considerable quantities, and every thing assumed the most wintry appearance, except that the cottages, and smoke, peeping through the woods, denoted that something like man was not distant. At Landshut I attended the Protestant church, in spite of the very noisy and bad singing, and the remains of Romish indulgencies, as keeping open shops, playing at cards, &c. Resumed my journey over an unpleasant wet road. The country appearing more cultivated, although barren of population, induced me to ask who tilled the lands: I could only, however, conclude that a

class of people, called Labradores in Spain, come here to earn, like the Irish in our own country, a little money to enable them to go back to their homes.

Kaisers Lautern is a considerable town, with seven thousand inhabitants. It is well built, and so clean as to present somewhat of the appearance of an English Market, or Borough town. Its situation is agreeable, surrounded by high and cultivated lands. It is said to belong to the King of Bavaria at present; at least the public-house at which I put up for the night belonged to his Majesty. Mayence, I believe, belongs to the Duke of Hesse Cassel. Frankfort is a free city, and Prussia is within a stone's-throw, so that, in fact, it was difficult to know under whose colours I was wandering. So much for the Acts of the great Vienna Congress, which have placed seven flags within the compass of two leagues.

Bidding adieu, however, to Kaisers Lautern and politics, I passed the fertile and picturesque plain on which it stands, and, ascending a long and steep hill, entered on a close country covered with thick and impenetrable forests; dined at Kirchen Boland, and reached Alzey late in the evening. The inhabitants were not remarkable for civility: for the landlord of the inn I first stopped at, actually turned me out, because I was no more than a foot traveller. I judged it better to pocket the affront; and, having purchased a small

loaf of bread, I pushed on, fatigued, cold, and mortified, till I reached a cottage, whose adjoining barn furnished my night's shelter, and I reposed with perfect content upon clean hay. Next morning I quitted my humble dwelling, and accompanied by innumerable carts, carriages, and Jews, proceeded towards Frankfort. I arrived at Mayence, stopping at the Imperial Hotel, near the Cathedral, and obtained my first view of that city, which holds so high a rank in Germany. The privileges formerly appertaining to it and its Archbishop, are gone on the same errand as many others, in consequence of the recent arrangements of the Congress of Sovereigns.

The Rhine here assumes a magnificent appearance, about the same width as the Thames at Westminster, and is crossed by a bridge formed of fifty-two boats, six hundred and thirty paces in length. Passing through a small fortified place opposite to to the city, I pursued the road to Frankfort; and, after walking over an elevated and romantic country (whose general scenery reminded me of the Sierras of Placentia, viewed from the high road between Badajos and Madrid, heightened as the comparison is by the striking similarity of the productions), I was at length gratified with entering the free and independent city of Frankfort.

The approach is very pleasing, amidst orchards, gardens, and vineyards; and one of those small, but beautiful towns, belonging to the opulent mer-

chants, is contiguous to the city. The houses are all on an extensive scale; the architecture is good, and the material generally free-stone. Another range of stately edifices, now converted into manufactories, and buildings of every imaginable size and decoration, from the stately mansion to the comfortable residence, down even to the neat cottage and the miserable cabin; all are here seen promiscuously thrown together, and liberty seems to wave her triumphant banner over them.

I put up at the Wine-Bush, a stately hotel, of which a Mr. Mohr was landlord, and whose brother had kept a tavern in England for twenty-eight years; but in consequence of some information lodged against him at the Alien Office, he had been compelled to quit, with an English wife and six children, to seek an asylum in his brother's hotel.

Frankfort, as a city, is too well known, and its fair too celebrated to need description here. It was formerly a fortified place, but the walls have been entirely demolished, and indeed their ruins are the best protection it can have. A young Livonian Baron, whom I met at the ordinary, gave me letters of recommendation to the frontiers of Siberia, and I departed.

The month of March brought with it much snow, and made my walk to Hanau a dreary one. Next day, passing over a low, flat, and uninteresting country, I reached Schlucten. The road was in a dreadful state, and my feet equally so. I

took temporary refuge in a small inn, whence I was soon driven by the rudeness of a sot. This fellow had even the audacity to follow me to another; but here his character was well known, and the opportune appearance of his wife, and her very free and dexterous use of a good cudgel, together with the remonstrance of the landlord, for a time rid me of his impertinence. Finding, however, a strong backer in his faithful dog, who would not permit any interference between man and wife, he again seated himself, and I set out once more in quest of a night's quarters.

Fuld, a beautiful little city, with a handsome cathedral, some colleges, two squares, many fine public and private buildings, and well regulated promenades, was, after Nancy, the pleasantest place I had seen on my journey. I arrived very late and much fatigued, having been induced to go so far by my companions, a wandering tailor, a regenerator of kettles, and an Italian cage-maker. Our community of fare enabled me to reduce my expenses one-half, a measure not wholly unnecessary from the state of my purse. A miserable barn was our only shelter, which it may be supposed I quitted as soon as possible, for Berka, ascending a steep hill knee-deep in snow. The task was difficult, nor did I arrive till noon. The view from the top of the hills which over-hang Berka was extensive, but desolate; hill, dale, and valley covered with snow, and nothing but the steeples of churches and the smoking chim-

neys to relieve the scene, till, late in the evening, I reached Sax Gotha. It appeared a handsome city, with many fine edifices.

Erfurth, where I arrived at noon next day, lies in a deep valley, and is well fortified. The country round it is tolerably cultivated and better peopled. It is remarkable, as the place where the allied sovereigns met upon a raft to adjust measures for their relative aggrandizements. Here I saw, for the first time, bad black bread; and here, also, a sight that richly compensated the other, viz. the first ray of the sun since I had left Paris. At Weimar I first met with sledges. Hence, in disobedience to the injunctions of the police at Erfurth, to wait upon the Russian Minister Plenipotentiary, I set forward to Naumburg. The road was as wretched as the scenery delightful; lying through fertile valleys, studded with villages in all the varieties of picturesque situation; the dark lofty oaks, shadowing the pure surface of the snow, contrasting with the beauty of the close green fir. I could gain no reception into any house at Naumburg but that of a poor shoemaker, which I did at the price of a glass of schnaps; for a second glass he mended my shoes and gaiters, and provided me with a truss of straw, on which I slept soundly.

Next day, accompanied by a Jew, I reached Leipsic, passing through Lutzen. The misery and barrenness of the scene fairly vie with the celebrity of its name. Four trees were pointed out to me as

the spot at which the Ex-Emperor commenced his flight. Lutzen formerly belonged to Saxony, but is now attached to Prussia; a sad change for the poor inhabitants, who complain bitterly of the exactions enforced by their new master. Nothing in the scene of Lutzen denotes the proximity of so celebrated a capital and court as Leipsic; which, in my judgement, will bear no comparison with Frankfort, except in size. I walked round this city the following day; but as I have nothing good to say of it, I will at least abstain from depreciating it.

Travelling over a low country, and by a bad road I reached the large, dirty and scattered town of Dueben, the first in Prussia Proper, and standing on the banks of the Salle. My reception was uncivil, if not inhuman. My passport demanded, myself interrogated by a set of whiskered ruffians, obliged to move from one guard to another, the object of sarcasm and official tyranny, I wanted no inducement, fatigued as I was, to proceed on my journey, but even this was not permitted me. A large public room full of military rubbish, and two long benches serving as chairs to an equally long table, were the place and furniture allotted me. I asked the landlord for supper; he laughed at me; —and to my demand of a bed, grinningly pointed to the floor, and refused me even a portion of the straw which had been brought in for the soldiers. Of all the dæmons that have ever existed or been imagined in human shape, I thought the landlord

of the inn the blackest. The figure of Gil Perez occurred to me, but it sunk in the comparison with the wretch then before me, for ill nature and personal hideousness. His face half covered with a black beard and large bristly whiskers, his stature below the common; his head sunk between his shoulders, to make room for the protuberance of his back; his eyes buried in the ragged locks of his lank grisly hair;—add to this a club-foot, and a voice which, on every attempt of speech, was like the shrieking of a screech-owl, and you have some faint idea of this mockery of a man. For some time he strutted about wrapped up with furs, which ill concealed the ragged testimonials of his wretched poverty, and taking immense quantities of snuff. The oaf at length deliberately opened a large box, and, placing in it a pillow and some straw, wrapped a blanket round him, and committed his person to this rude but novel species of bed, shutting the lid half way down with a piece of wood apparently kept for that purpose. I confess, my indignation was so strongly excited, that had materials been at hand, I had the strongest inclination to nail the monster down in his den. My feelings resolved into a determination to run all risks for an escape, and accordingly getting out at the window in the middle of the night, I took the road to Wittenberg, where I arrived at eight o'clock in the morning, after travelling over fifteen miles of sandy common, having previously crossed the Elbe

by a large wooden bridge. The river is formidable and the city fortified. Every step of the latter part of this journey stamps on my mind the recollection of the mild character of the Saxon, compared with that of the ruffian Prussian. From Wittenberg to Treuenbrizen, is a good road, but a few villages and a forest of firs constitute all that is visible, except a large dirty market town, which, however, provided me with clean straw, and consequently with a good bed.

Being now arrived in the land of turnpikes, where good roads and post-houses never fail, I started for Potsdam, distant thirty miles, and arrived in the early part of the evening. A flat country, sterile and almost deserted, save by the sandy pine, presents little to denote the approach to this *royal retreat.* With infinite difficulty I obtained admittance to a house, content to purchase black bread for my supper, and the use of a bench for my bed. Of Potsdam I can only say that the appearance is handsome, the royal edifices extensive, and many private ones magnificent; but so great an air of melancholy pervades the place, that it seems a fitter residence for the dead than the living;—I had the less regret at bidding it adieu.

A fine avenue of trees, and a good road, conducted me to Berlin, nor could the fertile imagination of a Humboldt discover aught else to denote the approach to the capital of his own country. For myself, I perambulated the streets nearly the whole

of the night, in search of a lodging, and was at last compelled to sleep on a bench in the Promenade. Next morning, I waited upon his Excellency Mr. Rose, the British Minister, whom I found fully aware of the character of Berlin, and its inhabitants. He was so good as to send one of his coachmen with me, and through so powerful an interference I did at length get a *comfortable unfurnished room in the capital of Prussia.* It should, however, be observed, that the Minister had offered me a room in his hotel which my own independent plan, joined to a fear of incommoding his Excellency, induced me to decline.

During my stay in Berlin, I had the honor of an invitation to a grand dinner given to the minister of Prussia and the foreign ambassadors, at which princes, counts, and dignitaries, down even to the pedestrian traveller were present. The dinner and wines were considered the best and choicest; but I would have preferred a plain joint and vegetables to all their unmeaning nothings, of made dishes, puffed cakes, *et cetera.* His Excellency asked me why I did not eat; I replied, I had seen nothing to partake of, at least nothing to satisfy a hungry traveller: his Excellency pardoned my honest boldness, and sent down a cold roast turkey and ham. Of these I had no difficulty in making a good dinner, and felt sensibly his Excellency's kind consideration. His Excellency, the Russian ambassador, had the goodness to present me with

blank passports for whatever route I might prefer, an attention on his part becoming the representative of his illustrious master. The young prince Labanoff was also of the party, whom I gratefully particularize as the kind facilitator of my journey to St. Petersburgh.

Berlin is seated on the Spree, which runs through various angles of the city. Many parts of it are handsomely built, especially what may be termed the court end; but every building, from the palace to the meanest hut, is built of brick, plaistered over. In short, Berlin is all show—a forced place, having little commerce, and less content: no smiling faces, no mediocrity, that happiest of all conditions. Berlin contains nothing but the most hardened military despots, and is, in short, a mere Court; though it contains two hundred thousand inhabitants. I saw no modes of gaining a livelihood, or even of passing time honestly. Billiards, cards and dice, succeed to the spectacle of the parade, and the streets present nothing but sentinels on guard.

Though a pedestrian, I was the first bearer of the information of the Duke de Berri's death, a full month's post being due at Berlin, owing to the immense quantity of snow.

CHAPTER II.

Angermunde— Stettin—Corben—Cosben —Romini — Zanow—Schlaws — Lauenburg — Neustadt — Dantzic — Koningsberg—Curisch Haff—Memel—Prolangen—Mittau—Riga—Dorpat — Narva — Yamberg — Kipene — St. Petersburg.

THE road from Berlin to Stettin is over a bleak and uncultivated country, where neither wood nor water, and but few people, are to be met with. The first night I put up at an old town, called Bernau, which threatens every day to fall on the heads of its inhabitants. Next day I reached Angermunde, having previously passed through Neustadt, where I had the comfort of dining upon pork, pease pudding, and good beer. On the road are many small villages, inhabited by wood-cutters, which afforded strong proof of the high state of perfection to which the training of dogs may be brought, each of those animals drawing a considerable load of billet-wood.

In Angermunde, which is a considerable town, with a large inn, I found no improvement in the Prussian character. I had stopt in the forenoon for refreshment at a little public-house, where a carriage had previously halted; and, entering the tap, demanded some beer, bread, and cheese. The owner of the carriage was partaking of the

same fare—good white bread and a bottle of ale. While I was enjoying, in hope, my companionship in these delicacies, the landlord set down before me certainly the worst bread and dirtiest beer I had ever seen. On my requesting to be placed on the same footing, he simply replied that those already before me were far too good, and that if I did not eat them I might go without; and, suiting the word to the sentiment, he immediately carried them away. Nor could anything induce the brute either to return these or sell me better, until my considerate fellow-traveller called, as for himself, for a fresh loaf and bottle of ale, and, presenting them to me, expressed his regret that I should have been so insulted in the necessitous condition in which I appeared. I accepted his kind offer, and then discovered that he was not a Prussian but a Pole.

I departed with the intention of reaching Stettin that night. The road was lined with horse-patrol, ostensibly to prevent smuggling; but, in reality, to examine travellers and their papers. At five in the evening, I came in sight of the ocean, and, in the midst of much fatigue, felt refreshed by the reflection that I was nearing a seaport. I passed the drawbridge at half-past eight, just in time to prevent being locked out—a circumstance of near concernment to me, after forty miles of heavy and dreary walking.

Stettin played me the same trick as Berlin. I

in vain demanded a night's lodging at three different houses, though I had previously ordered and eaten of as many suppers, for that express inducement. I then retreated to the wharf, cold and snowy as it was, when chance threw me in the way of a brother tar; with generous humanity, he roused me from the ground, on which I was lying; nor did he leave me until, at past midnight, he had succeeded in inducing the landlord of the Copenhagen Inn, to receive me, on condition that my passport should be deposited in his hands, as a security. A bed was provided me, and I soon drowned in sleep the memory of the country I was in, and the cares and fatigues I had undergone in reaching it.

Next morning I arose refreshed, and, in company of an honest Swede, waited upon his Excellency, Mr. Lutzen, *the British Consul,* to whom I presented a recommendatory note from Mr. Rose, who had given that very Mr. L. his situation. The reception I met with was barely decent at the time, and on the following day an invitation was transmitted to "the English Gentleman," to dine, at his country seat. I confess I could not but regret that no Englishman should be found better qualified to do justice to my countrymen.

Stettin, on the left bank of the Oder, is a strong and commanding position. Many opulent and respectable merchants residing in it, who carry on an advantageous trade during the early part of the

summer. No vessel of considerable burthen can reach the city: they are loaded thirty miles to the northward, at a place called Swinnerman, between which and Stettin is a large lake, at this season an entire sheet of ice. The town is said to contain twenty-two thousand inhabitants. It is the residence, or rather the lunatic asylum, of the dowager Princess, mother of the late Duchess of York. Her Highness is well treated, having also the use of a country residence.

Having refused Mr. Lutzen's hospitality, I took the road to Dantzic, over pasture land, and reached Golnow, a large scattered town, with a good inn and civil landlord. A fair had been held for the last three days, and much bustle still prevailed; after a comfortable refreshment I set forward, and reached Newgard and Pinnow the following day, amid snow, wind, and rain. Corben and Cosben, two miserable places, in a swampy situation, next brought me up, having several times missed my road, and sometimes with but little hope of recovering it. One of these instances occurred, in an attempt to cross a frozen lake. Fortunately the water was not so deep as to prevent my reaching the opposite shore. I then determined to steer one course, till I made a land fall, which I was enabled to do, by keeping right before the wind. It was now three o'clock, when a person whom I met informed me I had come but sixteen miles instead of thirty:—took a fresh departure, with good advice, and at last

did well. Thus much for quitting the high road to make a short cut, which a pedestrian should never do, except under a certainty of being right.

A post-house called Romini, with a good civil landlord, better wife, and seven well-behaved children, made me welcome, dried my clothes, and gave me a glass of schnaps to keep me warm; while a good supper of beef and potatoes was preparing for me. Cold, wet, weary, and half famished, I had entered the benevolent post-house; but one short hour restored me to life and good humour, and ultimately to the enjoyment of a clean bed, made on the spot for my accommodation, by filling a tick with hay, and sewing it up again. Happy, contented, though impoverished family, would to Heaven that benevolence like yours had more numerous followers among mankind! The whole property of this family could not have been worth ten pounds. I had arrived in a most miserable plight, the heavy and frequent rains having dilapidated my apparel, which, even in good weather, was not calculated to last long. My cap I had lost in the icy swamp, and, in default, my head was bound up with a piece of red flannel. My trowsers were literally torn to tatters: my shoes tied to my feet, to prevent their falling off: my shirt, except a flannel one, and waistcoat, both superseded by my outer jacket. All I had retained was sound health and a contented mind, and I wanted no more;—for this generous family had, during the night, put my entire

wardrobe to rights; and I departed the following morning with sound clothing, and reflections of heartfelt gratitude to have met with the beneficial exercise of such qualities in a quarter of the world where I had so little reason to expect them.

Over an execrable road, sandy heath, and in cheerless wintry weather, I resumed my route, and reached Zanow, on the banks of the little river Coslin. Here again I found a lodging in a cobbler's stall (it could scarcely be termed a room, being about nine feet square). An old bedstead and straw matrass served for him and his grandson in one corner; in the second, was a fire-place, but no fire; in the third, a cupboard, with an empty glass and two or three broken plates; and in the fourth, a board for his journeymen to work upon, when he has business to employ them, which now served for my bed-place. In this state I passed the night, charmed with the contentment of old Crispin, whose whole happiness seemed wrapped up in the future welfare of his grandson. I was provided with some straw and a horse rug, which, however they might assimilate me to the inhabitants of a stable, were truly acceptable; for the night was cold, and the windows, which transmitted the light only through oiled paper, could not prevent the sensible intrusion of the cold air.

Next morning, in spite of the obstacle of a sprained ankle, I pushed on towards Schlaws; where I was taken before the magistrates, to an-

swer the offence of smoking in the streets. My ignorance of the law, and my very palpable poverty, alone saved me from a fine. In the evening I reached Skolpe, over thirty-five miles of bad road. The police supplied me with quarters at the guard-house; a circumstance rendered almost necessary to me, from the unaccountable but manifest ill-will of the women towards me. The ill-fated Ledyard, had he been situated as I have often been, would have allowed exceptions to his beautiful encomium upon the benevolence of the fair sex. But Ledyard's fortune in this respect was better, and he was justified, by his own experience, in espousing the cause of the whole sex.

At the guard-house I entertained the people with the history of my travels, past, present and to come, and so greatly were they interested by the recital that they actually strove to lay me under a promise of not going beyond St. Petersburg. They urged upon me their own habits and feelings so strongly indicative of contentment, and even proposed to me to take a farm among them; but, from many reasons, I felt little disposed to adopt the suggestion.

Lauenburg next day became my halting place, after twenty-seven miles march; the country becoming better cultivated and more peopled than of late. I endured much from the bad condition of my shoes, which the variations of weather made alternately like sponge and horn. I repaired the

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mischief as well as possible with spirits and tallow, the only resource I had, for my finances were not in a condition to allow me a new pair. I reached Neustadt (eighteen miles), almost sinking under pain and fatigue. From hence the country assumes a very picturesque appearance: it bears, however, a desperately bad name from the bands of robbers that infest it. For myself I was so far from apprehension on this point, that I laid my account with having my necessities mitigated by their means. The people, however, were civil and obliging.

I now started for Dantzic, distant about thirty-three miles: at about the tenth I was overtaken by the post-coach, and bargained for a conveyance for three francs. This wretched vehicle, which does not merit the name even of a waggon, professes to accommodate nine passengers. It has three benches —the two back ones looking toward the front, the centre bench without a back: beyond the hindermost seat is the depository of the baggage, amounting to about one-third of the whole machine. It goes upon four wheels, each moving on a strong axle-tree, and is without any sort of spring whatever. The *tout ensemble* is probably more like a show-cart than any thing else.

Of its mortal contents, two were well-dressed young men, connected with the commerce of Dantzic: a young nobleman about to join his regiment, to perform his regulated quota of a year's service:

two dashing females, setting their caps at the two merchants—(these were bound to Dantzic or Konigsberg, to open the season as the ice breaks up and ships arrive, then to return to Berlin, under the auspices of Madam B.): a sergeant of the royal guard, having the charge of a priest, either banished or under arrest, for what offence I could not learn; they both appeared decent well behaved men. The eighth was a young Saxon Jew, from Leipsic, bound to Riga and St. Petersburg. His person was rendered remarkable by his long white soft flaxen hair, and white eye lashes and eyebrows. He seemed about twenty, not deficient in common sense, although the company were much inclined to make him their butt. In this vehicle and this society I reached Dantzic,—to my no small satisfaction: for surely no pretence of a conveyance ever yet put forth by man can be compared with a Prussian post-coach. Just fifteen hours were consumed in going thirty-two miles.

The following morning I paid my respects to Mr. Gibson, the British consul, who received me with his well-known cordiality and friendship. I dined with him; the intervening time being employed in walking about the city as much as the afflicted state of my feet would allow.

Dantzic is so well known a place, that I shall not enter on any description of it here. It was formerly a free city. Its immense fortifications, which require an army of thirty thousand men to defend

them, and the numerous sieges it has undergone, have given it a high and deserved reputation. Its present population is forty-five thousand, all now in allegiance to the king of Prussia.

Though several inducements were held out to me to remain here, I staid only long enough to view a painting in the Exchange, which is deserving of notice, and another with a fine piece of sculpture in the Cathedral. In the first a boat is represented in the act of crossing the river Styx; and several persons, at that time residents of Dantzic, are pourtrayed as the passengers, the burgomaster and his daughter being particularly conspicuous. The story, however, says, that the natural anger of the parties thus libelled was appeased by the painter's consenting to add his own portrait to those already in the boat. The picture was then hung up in the Exchange: but the crafty artist contriving to gain admittance during the night, added to the figures that of an angel with a boat-hook stopping the boat, presumably in consequence of the painter's being in it. The burgomaster could not disguise his vexation, though the offence was thus neutralized; but the picture was suffered to remain.

The other painting, for which the Emperor Alexander is said to have offered twenty-five thousand guineas [query, roubles?] is a representation of the Last Day. It is said to be one of the most antient as well as finest specimens extant, and is the property of the city, who cannot alienate it. The sculp-

ture, by Michael Angelo, of the Crucifixion, is said to have been done from the observations of real suffering, the artist having crucified and stabbed a boy expressly for that purpose.

With a strong pair of English shoes, the present of my friend Mr. Marshal, I departed, passing the range of fortified hills on the right, and the port of Dantzic with its shipping on the left. I now entered on a well cultivated country, passed the neat little town of Dnishaw, crossing the Vistula by a well managed ferry. Thence to Marienberg, so celebrated for its castle, which I had no opportunity of seeing, as it was at that time undergoing repair. The following day I reached Elbing, over twenty miles of low cultivated country. It appeared a pretty town, having a good export trade by vessels, which, though at fifty miles distance from the sea, come up even to the city walls. The third day I reached Konigsberg (thirty-five miles) exceedingly tired. Although a walled, it is not a fortified city; but contains sixty thousand inhabitants, and is certainly the second city in Prussia. The trade is considerable, though checked by the shallowness of the navigation, which obliges vessels of burthen to load and unload their cargoes at Pillau. The privileges granted it by the present Sovereign have, however, in some considerable degree, lightened the inconvenience.

My journey to Memel was over a cultivated country, until I got to the Curisch Haff, which I reach-

ed with some difficulty, having several times lost my way, and generally by misdirections. After a direct progress of only ten miles, an old woman (now, Ledyard, thou art right!) took pity upon me, and I passed the night comfortably under her roof. A good fish supper, with a drop of my landlady's cordial, so exhilirated me as to induce me to join a groupe of dancers, who were thus commemorating Good-Friday, as well as celebrating a marriage, which had taken place that day, between a young fisherman and the "maid of the inn". I had the honour of waltzing with the bride, a fine buxom girl of nineteen.

I hesitated a little, next morning, upon the advice of an old sailor, to stop at the village till the Haff broke up, when I might get a passage to Memel, by water, free. The old tar had offered to find me in provisions, for the consideration of my assistance, in the mean time, in hauling the net. Perhaps, under circumstances, I might have acceded, if I could have relied on the security; but fearing this, I resolved to attempt the crossing of the Haff towards Krantz. I was, however, at the risk of my life, compelled to return, and only late at night reached a large fishing village, called Jackaw. From thence, next day, along a sandy beach, with a sun which, even in this season and climate, enabled me to light my pipe by my spectacles, I got to a neat post-house at Nidden, situated in the midst of sandhills.

A young recruit bound to Memel, had been my companion the previous day. In the evening a few fishermen, also going to Memel, offered us a passage in their boat; my companion consented on the instant, and, late and cold as it was, we embarked. The wind was fair, and we had but thirty-five miles to go. The crew consisted of two men and a woman, all three of whom laboured at the oar until midnight, when, having passed the village of Swatsash, the boat encountered the ice, at a narrow part of the Haff, and in the severity of the frost, and the extreme darkness, we became completely blocked up.

In this exigency, to give more room, the young recruit and I were obliged to quit. He, poor fellow! had been enjoying a sound sleep, wrapped up in great-coats; to him, therefore, this reverse seemed severer than to me. For myself, I felt aware of the impropriety of resuming our journey at that hour, and hungry and fatigued as we were. But what was to be done? Return I would not, although a village was within two miles of us; yet to proceed was impossible, from our ignorance of the way, and the darkness of the night. We were also quite destitute of bread, tobacco, or schnaps, and my knapsack was in charge of the young Saxon, who had agreed to take it to Memel for me.—I felt as if completely undone. Putting, however, a good face upon it, I took off my shoes, hat, and jacket, and taking a spare flannel waistcoat and drawers, which I had fortunately retained in a bundle with a

dry pair of worsted stockings, with this I made myself a bed, putting my feet into my hat, and pointing them towards the wind, and my shoes under my head for a pillow: then lying down and drawing my jacket over my shoulders, I slept very soundly; although, upon awaking next morning I was both wet and stiff; but after taking some strong exercise backwards and forwards, I recovered the use of my limbs and my health.

The recruit had not slept at all, but lay bemoaning his hard fate, which indeed was sufficiently severe; his tight pantaloons, military boots, and tighter coat, exposing him much more than myself to the inclemency of the weather. As he was too obstinate to take my advice, or follow my example, all I could do was to pity him, and rouse him to take some violent exercise. This in some degree recovered him, and we moved on towards Memel, crossing the isthmus, and following the northern path. By seven in the morning we reached a tavern on the summit of a hill, which overlooks the city, and here I was obliged to leave him, in a state of fever. Upon my gaining the beach, it appeared doubtful whether the ferry-boat could attempt the passage, or not, there being a heavy gale, and the ice driving with great velocity; I however persevered, and was safely landed in Memel, in time to partake of a good dinner at the Sun Inn.

Memel is a highly respectable, convenient, commercial town. The harbour is small and secure.

A good theatre, large church, public hospital, and a palace, are its principal buildings. Its trade would be much more considerable, were it not for the monopolies and privileges granted to its rival Konigsberg. Its exports and imports (the same commodities as in other Prussian towns) are mostly in the hands of Polish Jews, the merchants having little cordiality with each other. The contraband trade with Russia was formerly considerable, but heavy losses and heavier punishments seem to have subdued this spirit of speculation. I received great marks of kindness from its inhabitants, who even expostulated with me on my seemingly unhappy mode of life. If happiness, however, be the one pursuit in this world, it may admit of question, whether a traveller does not attain a greater portion of it than most others—certainly more than those who languish on the lap of ease, and who, in one shape or other, feel the tortures of anxiety, though surrounded by all the luxuries which affluence can procure.

The Saxon having arrived with my knapsack, I departed, in company with a real friend in the person of Mr. Robson, who kindly gave me a seat in his carriage as far as our road lay together. At thirteen versts we reached the frontier, at a small Russian town called Polangen. A police office, guard-house, and custom-house are established here. Our passports were backed for a silver rouble, and the same sum saved our baggage from a

rude and useless search. The manifest advantage to the traveller in the regulations on the frontier, no less than the presence of Cossacks, served to remind me that I had entered the Russian empire.

The road to Liebau is generally through a sandy forest of pines, the trees of which were torn up by the roots or bent double, by the effects of late gales, rendering the road difficult to pass. From Liebau we continued our route with post horses harnessed in a teelega, a vehicle peculiar to Russia, and which certainly may remain so, being constructed on a model from which no other nations would desire to copy. It is sufficiently easy of description, being in short just the shape of a baker's trough, with open railings for the sides. It is long enough to lounge or even lie down in, and, filled, as it is generally, with hay, is really no very unpleasant vehicle; the absence of springs being in some measure counterbalanced by the breadth of the axle-trees and the smallness of the wheels; which, while it lessens the chance of overturning, renders the danger, in such an event, less imminent. Our route to Mittau was performed agreeably, and my friend did the honours as became one in his situation in life. The scenery was not devoid of interest, the country being well cultivated and tolerably wooded, though stragglingly inhabited.

Mittau, the ancient capital of Courland, has not much appearance of a city, though it seems to have been well built. The royal or rather imperial

palaces are extensive ranges of building converted to one use, all still in an unfinished state. We were detained some time by the ice in the river Aa, and nothing but an extra rouble could have passed us across. We had then to walk three miles to reach the post-house: here my friend, whose weight did not admit of his moving with the same velocity or ease as myself, was knocked up, and we halted for the night, receiving every civility and attention.

The banks of the Dwina and the city of Riga hove in sight the next day, and we reached the latter at noon. The history and description of this ancient city are well known. The emperor appears much attached to it, and has honoured the British consul, a gentleman and merchant esteemed and respected by all classes, with particular marks of his consideration; having even condescended to accept apartments in his beautiful mansion. During the late invasion by Napoleon, the suburbs were burnt by order of the governor, on what authority I know not; but he preferred suicide to the survival of his honour, or the result of a court-martial. New edifices are now erecting on the site of the old suburbs, which bid fair to become the most beautiful part of the city. A magnificent view of the city, with the surrounding country highly cultivated, is commanded from the top of the Livonian steeple, three hundred feet high. Quitting Riga, still in company with Mr. Robson, I continued in the same easy carriage, and over the same execrable sandy

road, to Woolmar; the country thinly peopled and less cultivated. Here, to my extreme regret, and with a deep impression of his kindness, my friend and I parted, our routes lying at right angles. I was now for the first time alone in Russia, and my reflections on the circumstance were rather of a melancholy cast. At Stackeln I overtook the St. Petersburg waggon, but its pace was too slow to induce my joining company; otherwise I would gladly have availed myself of it both for guidance and protection. I therefore pushed on, and soon reached the considerable village of Gulben; and next day at Udin, I first trod Russian snow, proving that I had travelled faster than the seasons, as though winter had past me in the middle, I found it still lingering in the northern boundary of Europe.

The inhabitants hitherto appear civil and less phlegmatic than the Germans; although an exception to this character had the knavery to make off with a pipe, a pound of tobacco, and the pair of shoes which I had received from Mr. Marshal. Such things once lost, there is but little hope of their recovery; I therefore made no complaint. Reached Dorpat considerably fatigued, having walked forty miles from Teylitz. Upon my arrival it began to rain hard. I procured with difficulty a lodging in the entrance of a tallow-chandler's shop, at least such I judged it from the nature of its effluvia.

Dorpat is a beautiful little city, with a univer-

sity; and bids fair, for its regularity and cleanliness, to vie with Nancy in France. It stands upon the right bank of the Ember. Handsome edifices, with an imperial palace; wide, clean, and regular streets; a beautiful stone bridge, in a picturesque and fertile country, with its local situation between two lakes, bespeak its important rank, independently of its antiquity.

On the following day I reached Nennal. I observed on my route none but ugly women and long-bearded men, a sterile country,—and yet to me a costly one, for I was obliged to pay a silver rouble for a coffee-breakfast,—a charge I shall take care never to incur again, as not suiting the state of my finances. In spite of the approach of spring, the weather seemed to increase in coldness, and some snow fell; but my anxiety induced me to push for Narva, where I arrived in time to breakfast;—the road relieved only with imperial post-houses.

Narva, a considerable town, and the first in the government of St. Petersburg, possesses massive remains of an ancient fortress, built by Ivan Vassilich the Great, overhanging the perpendicular banks of the Narova. It carries too much of a military air for me to particularize.

When on the point of resuming my journey, I was accosted by a black gentleman, who, as he informed me, was a resident and retired merchant of St. Petersburg. Understanding that I was a foreigner, he entered into many inquiries with me,

of my rank, country, the object of my travels, and my reason for pursuing them on foot. To these questions I replied; and to the last simply observed, that I was in the habit of travelling on foot, and that indeed I could not afford to see the world in any more convenient manner. He expressed his regret, that a man of *my merit* had not been better rewarded by fortune—and his satisfaction, at the same time, that he had it in his power to offer me a lift even to the capital of Russia, having two carriages empty; and though he was prevented by an affair of importance from resuming the journey that day, I accepted the offer, and agreed to await his pleasure, rejoiced at the opportunity afforded me of entering the Imperial capital in style, with less expense and still less fatigue. In the mean time, we ate and drank freely at his charge; and, not to appear backward, I ordered for myself the luxury of a proper bed-room, where I slept well.

I learnt next morning that the important business which had detained my friend was neither more nor less than an intrigue with a rosy-cheeked chamber-maid. This being despatched, we departed; he in the first, and I in the second carriage, each drawn by four horses. I had a specific charge from him to use no ceremony in abusing the coachman, if he should slacken in his driving. I soon forgot this admonition in a sound sleep, for which, by the by, I afterwards got a severe reprimand.

We passed through Yamberg, an imperial resi-

dence in a ruinous state; when the Gulph of Finland, opening to our view, presented to us an immense mass of ice, studded with little snowy hillocks; but without a single vessel over its whole surface.

We reached Kipene the next evening, where we halted for post horses. The country had been a low overflowed desert. The weather was cold; and I was reminded, by my feelings, that we had reached about the latitude of 60°. My companion, having again treated me with supper and bed, left me for the night, evidently a little nettled at his ill success in engaging the affections of a little Russian girl who had waited on us at table.

While at breakfast next morning, and just as the horses were announced, my companion asked me whether I was furnished with a passport. I replied in the affirmative. He requested to see it; and, observing my name, inquired if I was related "to Admiral *Kakran*, who was in de West Indies, at de capture of de Danish Islands in 1807?" Being informed I was the admiral's nephew, he asked, "Are you the son of Massa *Kakran Jahnstone?*"—"Yes, I am."—"You are den," said he, "dat lilly Massa Jonny, I know, at de same time."—It now turned out that this black gentleman with the two carriages and four horses each, had been my father's and my uncle's servant thirteen years before. Having talked over old matters, he remarked that he could never have recognized me, from the alteration that

time had made in my features; observing that I seemed to have verified the West Indian proverb, "Like the black man's pig, *very lilly, but dam old*." I acknowledged the justice of the remark, and proceeded to inquire his history; but, as he did not seem inclined to be communicative on this head, I did not press him: and we proceeded—both in the same carriage; my friend no longer considering me as a *menial follower*.

At noon, on the 30th of April, I reached St. Petersburg, having been eighty-three days from London in performing a distance of sixteen hundred miles, an average of nearly twenty miles a-day. My sable friend, at parting, declined to give me his address. I suppressed my chagrin; but felt an increased curiosity to learn the source of his wealth and his situation in life.

The following morning I was relating the adventure at a friend's house, where Doctor Ryan (the medical attendant of the young Prince Labanoff's family, with whom I had dined at the house of Mr. Rose, in Berlin) was present. He was mentioning that the young Prince, being on the road from Petersburg to Berlin, had been overtaken by winter in his summer carriage; and as the latter season was near at hand, had sent his black servant to Narva, to bring his carriages to the capital. Fortune's frolic was now explained: my wealthy, dashing, over-bearing, and intriguing companion being no more than the very humble attendant of his Highness.

Having once got settled in a comfortable lodging, my first duty was to call upon Sir Daniel Bailey, the British consul-general, then the only representative of the British Court;—Lord Cathcart having quitted St. Petersburg, and Mr. Cassamajor deceased. In Sir Daniel I found, not only a sincere friend, but an able advocate for the plans I had in view. Through his means I transmitted a memorial to Count Nesselrode, the foreign minister, who handed it to Count Kotchubey for the approbation of his Imperial Majesty. The memorial contained a request, that I might be permitted to pass through the Russian Empire, on my way to America, either by Kamtchatka, or Behring's Straits. I also solicited a sealed mandate from the Emperor, with an order to all governors and persons in authority, to assist me to the utmost of their power; besides an open order to the police, not to interfere with, or molest me. I requested, in addition, an especial letter to the Governor-General of Siberia.

I had been given to understand that his Imperial Majesty had no objections to my proceeding, although he expressed a belief that, when I should be furnished with the required documents, I should flinch from my purpose. I soon, however, satisfied the Minister upon this point, by declaring I would be ready to set out at half an hour's notice. In the mean time the Intendant-General of police gave me three audiences, examining me as to my rank and condition, my plan and its object, with the *et cetera*

of interrogatories, administered by persons in official situations, when desirous of extracting information beyond the avowed object.

His Excellency, at length, promised me his assistance, and recommended me to Count Kotchubey, into whose hands my business had entirely fallen. The Count also gave me three audiences, repeating the same interrogatories as the Intendant. Finding, however, that I adhered to one simple story—stating as my object, a wish to employ, improve, and amuse myself, at the same time rendering to society all the service of which I was capable—his Excellency also dismissed me with favour; and through his interference, sanctioned by the generosity and noblemindedness of the Emperor, I procured even more than I had expected, or demanded. His Imperial Majesty had also the consideration to ask Colonel Cathcart, who had recently arrived as successor to Mr. Cassamajor, whether I wanted money, and how much, to enable me to start. I replied in the negative, expressing, very truly, my surprise and gratitude at the offer. I was, moreover, instructed, in case of such necessity, to apply to the respective governors, at the places I should pass.

That this unsolicited munificence, on the part of the Emperor, could only have sprung from the generous feelings of his heart, and was not adopted as a *façon de parler*, is clear, from the fact, that his Imperial Majesty did afterwards request of Sir Charles

Bagot to be informed, whether I really needed money, accompanied with an intimation, that in such case, I should be supplied from the Imperial Treasury. I think I do no wrong to anyone, in believing, that no other crowned head in Europe, would have given itself any concern about me, or my concerns, or have taken any notice of a stranger presenting himself, without any recommendation of any weight, with the single exception of a private letter of introduction to Sir Robert Kerr Porter.

Among other intimations made to me, as from the Emperor, was one which I believe originated with the Directors of the Russian American Company: it was in the shape of a request that I should refrain from making any inquiries respecting the affairs of the said Company. Coming througha public channel, I of course considered it my duty to promise compliance with the request, though it appeared to me singular that the Russian Company should have for one moment suspected me of ill-will towards them, or of being employed as a spy on their affairs. It is, however, certain that they had some apprehension of this sort; as they not only threw obstructions in my way to the Emperor, but after offering and promising me letters of recommendation to their different settlements and chancellories, refused them; upon the plea that they were useless, from my ignorance of the Russian language. Whether Mr. Crammer, their director, from whom this unlooked for and unhandsome treatment ema-

nated, believed that Russian civility would be limited to those who understood the language, I know not; but every considerate person must perceive that the less I understood of the manners, language and customs of any foreign country, the more I actually stood in need of assistance in it. And if the Company were conscious that their affairs required secrecy, their harsh conduct towards me was certainly the least likely mode of binding me to their interests, or of securing the fulfilment of any promise they might oblige me to make.

During my three weeks stay in St. Petersburg, I was most hospitably received by several respectable British merchants. I employed the spare time in walking about the capital and viewing its wonders; and although I abandon the description of them, as a task beyond my power, I cannot help saying that no city I have seen can equal it in external magnificence. Large, straight, and parallel streets, noble public buildings in every style of architecture, numerous imperial and private palaces, handsome pavements for carriages and foot-passengers, several beautiful canals running round and through the city, and carrying away every offensive matter, the perfect cleanliness in every part, its immense number of churches, and lastly, its magnificent river washing the finest quays in Europe;—these are only the more striking features of St. Petersburg. The bustle in most of the principal streets, and the number of vehicles of various de-

scriptions add to its importance. It is, however, a little too stiffened with a military air, being every where crowded with soldiers and police-officers, and the daily parades are better attended than the workshops and manufactories. Nor is this tendency surprising when it is considered that, in one short war, Russia has arisen from comparative insignificance, to rank as the third if not the second military power in Europe. It may indeed be objected that her advances are too rapid for her age; but this point I leave for discussion to those who have not before them a journey of eight or ten thousand miles, for which I have not a single hour to make preparation.

CHAPTER III.

St. Petersburg—Tzarsko Selo—Tosna—Novgorod—Zaitzova—Yedrova—Vishney-Volotchok—Torjock—Tver—Davidova—Moscow—Vladimir—Dratchevo—Pogost—Paulovo—Nishney Novgorod.

I WAS now furnished with all the documents which I had deemed necessary; they consisted of the following: The customary passport, with the substitution of the minister's for the governor-general's signature; a secret letter to the governor-general of Siberia; and two official documents which I shall give at length.

The first of these (addressed—"To all civil governors", and signed by the minister of the interior) states that—"The bearer hereof, Captain John Cochrane, of the British royal navy, purposing to travel through Russia on foot, is now on his departure for Kamtchatka, with the intention of penetrating from thence to America.

"Having by the command of his Imperial Majesty provided this traveller with open instructions to the police of all the towns and provinces lying in his tract from St. Petersburg to Kamtchatka, this is also to desire all the chiefs of the different governments through which he may travel, to aid Captain Cochrane, as far as possible, to proceed on his jour-

ney without interruption, as well as to afford him lawful defence and protection in case it should be desired."

The other was an "Open Order of his Imperial Majesty Alexander the First, Autocrat of all the Russias," &c. &c. &c. signed by the same minister; and stating that "the bearer hereof, Captain John Cochrane of his Britannic Majesty's royal navy, having undertaken to travel on foot through the Russian empire, is now on his way to Kamtchatka, intending from thence to pass over to America. The police of the towns and provinces lying in his track from St. Petersburg to Kamtchatka, are in consequence hereof, not only forbidden to obstruct Captain Cochrane in his journey, but are moreover commanded, in case of necessity, to afford him every possible assistance".

I quitted the hospitable habitation of Sir Robert Porter, on the 24th May; and with my knapsack on my back, set out, and trotted over a partially cultivated country. A pretty avenue of birch trees lined the road, as if to accompany me as far as possible on my departure from the precincts of civilized man. Nature here got the better of a tolerably stout heart; and, as I turned round to catch a last glimpse of the capital I had left, and of the friends to whom I had bade, perhaps, a last adieu, I could not suppress my grief, and, had not my honour been committed, should certainly have returned. A sigh escaped me as I ejaculated a last farewell, till start-

ling at the expression of my weakness, I resumed my journey with slow and melancholy steps.

It was ten o'clock (for I had now a watch), and I had reached six miles. The night was beautifully clear, though rather cold from the effects of a northern breeze; while the moon was near her full. I looked at the beautiful luminary, and actually asked myself whether I were, as had been asserted, under the baneful influence of that planet. Smiling that I received no reply, I then considered my projects and intentions, and the conduct I ought to follow; and, sitting down at a fountain on the Poulkousky hill, I read to myself a few lessons, which the time and the occasion seemed to inspire. "Go," said I, "and wander with the illiterate and almost brutal savage!—go and be the companion of the ferocious beast!—go and contemplate the human being in every element and climate, whether civilized or savage—of whatever tribe, nation, or religion. Make due allowance for the rusticity of their manners; nor be tempted to cope with them in those taunts, insults, and rudenesses to which the nature of thy enterprize will subject thee. Contemn those incidental circumstances which but too often surprise mankind from their good intentions, and deprive the world of much useful and interesting information. Avoid all political and military topics, and remember that

The proper study of mankind is man.

Should robbers attack thee, do not, by a foolish resistance, endanger thy life.—Man may become hardened by crimes, and persist in the practice of them, till, meeting with resistance he will be urged to murder: but man is still a human being, even while seeking his subsistence by rapine and plunder; and seldom, from mere wantonness, will he spill the blood of his fellow-creature. It is only by patience, perseverance, and humility; by reducing thyself to the lowest level of mankind, that thou canst expect to pass through the ordeal with either safety or satisfaction." Something like these were myself dictated precepts, and I pledged their performance in a draught from the cool and limpid fountain.

In company with some carters I resumed my journey; and, depositing my knapsack in one of their vehicles, entered into conversation as well as my scanty knowledge of German would allow me.

As we proceeded, there suddenly rose to the south-east a tremendous blaze, the cause of which it seemed difficult to conjecture. At first I imagined it might be, as I had often seen in England, a blazing bonfire, with a group of mirthful rustics revelling round it. But the scene grew soon too terrific to allow of so simple a solution, the flame rising to a prodigious height, and the smoke rolling into a beautiful dark arch on the clear sky. Immense masses of fire, and sparks at intervals, exploded and separated like a rocket.

We continued to gaze as we advanced, till, on reaching the beautiful town of Tzarsko Selo, the source was, indeed, but too apparent—it was the Emperor's favorite palace, wrapt in an inextinguishable flame. I had looked forward with hope, to enjoy the survey of so celebrated an edifice, and had actually taken a letter of recommendation to Prince Theodore Galitzin, one of its principal inhabitants. It was midnight. Parties of men surrounded the wasting pile. All, however, was order and regularity: not a voice was heard amid the thousands of people employed. The Emperor was present, evidently impressed with extreme regret, and all appeared powerfully to partake the sentiment. His Majesty, however, continued to give frequent directions with perfect coolness.

Tzarsko Selo was the palace in which the Emperor, and his brother Constantine, had been brought up and passed their earlier years; it was hither, also, that the Emperor was accustomed to retire, when the cares of state permitted him, to lose among its ameliorating beauties the anxieties of a throne, and the toils of so great a government. It had been greatly embellished by his Majesty, and was considered one of the most beautiful retreats in Europe. Years of time, and millions of money must be expended, to make it what it was but yesterday morning.

Being excessively fatigued, and finding my individual exertions perfectly useless towards check-

ing the progress of the flames, I retired to the gardens, where, I passed a couple of restless hours on a bed of moss, amid herbs and flowers, whose sweet perfumes were as yet unvanquished by the fire or smoke. Some dæmon seemed to hover over me, and my dreams presented the probable incidents of my journey, in all the horrors which imagination could shadow forth. I arose, and returned to the scene of devastation, now evidently increasing, and appearing to defy the numerous engines pouring upon it from all sides.

The dome of the church fell with a tremendous crash, and such was the immense mass of fire that fell with it, and so great the force of the rebound, that in its second descent, and assisted by the wind, it set fire to two other parts of the Palace, until then considered safe. At this critical moment his Imperial Majesty gave a strong proof of steady collectedness. While the fire was raging from apartment to apartment, apparently mocking the resistance of man, the Emperor gave direction that the doors should be walled up with bricks. This was instantly done, and by such an expedient alone could the amber, the most valuable chamber, have been wrested from the general destruction.

In the morning I proceeded towards Tosna, where I arrived at seven in the evening. Young firs and birch border the road, which is good; though the country presents but little of interest, and seems

to support but a slender population, considering its proximity to the capital.

I passed the night in the cottage of a farmer, resigning myself to the attacks and annoyance of such vermin as generally haunt impoverished dwellings. I was proportionably pleased in the morning to pursue my journey. My route was towards Liubane, at about the ninth mile-stone from which I sat down, to smoke a segar, or pipe, as fancy might dictate, when I was suddenly seized from behind, by two ruffians, whose visages were as much concealed as the oddness of their dress would permit. One of them, who held an iron bar in his hand, dragged me by the collar towards the forest, while the other, with a bayonetted musket, pushed me on, in such a manner, as to make me move with more than ordinary celerity; while a boy, auxiliary to these vagabonds, was stationed on the road side to keep a look out.

We had got some sixty or eighty paces into the thickest part of the forest, when I was desired to undress, and having stript off my trowsers and jacket, then my shirt, and, finally, my shoes and stockings, they proceeded to tie me to a tree. From this ceremony, and from the manner of it, I fully concluded that they intended to try the effect of a musket upon me, by firing at me as they would at a mark. I was, however, reserved for fresh scenes: the villains, with much *sang froid* seated themselves

at my feet, and rifled my knapsack and pockets, even cutting out the linings of the clothes in search of bank bills or some other valuable articles. They then compelled me to take at least a pound of black bread, and a glass of rum poured from a small flask which had been suspended from my neck. Having appropriated my trowsers, shirts, stockings and shoes (the last I regretted most of all, as they were a present from Sir D. Bailey)—as also my spectacles, watch, compass, thermometer, and small pocket-sextant, with one hundred and sixty roubles, they at length released me from the tree, and at the point of a stiletto made me swear that I would not inform against them,—such, at least, I conjectured to be their meaning, though of their language I understood not a word.

Having received my promise, I was again treated to bread and rum, and once more fastened to the tree, in which condition they finally abandoned me. Not long after, a boy who was passing heard my cries, and set me at liberty. I did not doubt he was sent by my late companions upon so considerate an errand, and felt so far grateful: though it might require something more than common charity to forgive their depriving me of my shirt and trowsers, and leaving me almost as naked as I came into the world.

To pursue my route or return to Tzarsko Selo would, indeed, be alike indecent and ridiculous, but being so, and there being no remedy, I made

therefore 'forward' the order of the day; having first with the remnant of my apparel rigged myself *à l'Ecossoise*, I resumed my route. I had still left me a blue jacket, a flannel waistcoat, and a spare one, which I tied round my waist in such a manner that it reached down to the knees: my empty knapsack was restored to its old place, and I trotted on with even a merry heart.

Within a few miles I passed betwixt files of soldiers employed in making a new road, under the orders of General Woronoff, upon whom I waited to report the situation in which I was placed. The servant, perhaps naturally enough, refused to let me pass without first acquainting him with my business, I however, steadily persisted in my determination, and at length hearing the noise and scuffle of turning me out, the General appeared and listened to my mournful tale. The good heart of his Excellency suggested the necessity of first administering me food: some clothes were then offered to me, which I declined, considering my then dress as peculiarly becoming. The general then sent an officer with two men back to the village to make inquiries concerning the robbery. These were, however, fruitless, and I quitted, with many thanks to the General, in his own carriage, which was directed to take me the first station. I soon discovered that carriage-riding was too cold, and therefore preferred walking, bare-footed as I was; and on the following morning reached Tschudovo, a low and unculti-

vated waste, a hundred miles from St. Petersburg. Thence to Podberezie, and thence to Novgorod. I had passed on the road many populous and neat villages, and numerous tents belonging to the military workmen, which gave additional interest to a fertile and picturesque scenery. To the left was the river Volkhoff, on which Novgorod stands. The approach is grand, and the numerous spires and steeples of the churches and convents, with their gilded and silvered casements glittering in the sun, recalled for a moment the memory of its ancient splendour. I entered at two o'clock, and immediately waited on the governor. He would have provided me with clothing on the instant; I was however hungry, and requested food. The governor smiled, but assented, and I then accepted a shirt and trowsers.

I was recommended by his Excellency to stop at Novgorod a few days, under the promise that he would apprehend the robbers. I told him I felt no doubt they would be discovered; but, before that time, I should have reached the heart of Siberia. Good quarters were, mean time, provided me, in the habitation of a Russian merchant, to whom I had a letter of recommendation from St. Petersburg. He had also the kind consideration to provide me a complete refit; and though this must have been at an expense of thirty or forty roubles, he positively refused my offer of reimbursement —an offer I was enabled to make, through the de-

licate kindness of his Excellency the Governor Gerebzoff.

This ancient and celebrated city, which in former days was characterized by the proverb, "Who can resist the Gods, and the great Novgorod?" is now only the capital of a province of its own name. In its former glory, it was the metropolis of a great Republic, with four hundred thousand souls within its walls. The population is now reduced to a fortieth part. Its immense trade had been gradually declining since the cruelties of Ivan Vassilich II. and was completely annihilated by the removal of the seat of government, by Peter the Great, from Moscow to the Gulf of Finland. Many handsome edifices, now in ruins, are lamentable proofs of its former grandeur, and present decay. Its Archiepiscopal Cathedral, small, but very ancient; is filled with superstitious relics, and the ashes of several Russian Grand Dukes.

The steeples of Novgorod present a monument of considerable pride, in the estimation of its inhabitants. Their distinction is in the cross, at the top, standing alone, unaccompanied by the crescent, and this is an emblem intimating, that the Tartars, in all their invasions, never succeeded so far, as to enter the city. This distinction universally holds in Russia: the re-conquered cities bearing the crescent, but surmounted by the cross.

The following day, being that of Pentecost, I attended the service in the Cathedral; and though

I understood nothing of the language, was forcibly struck with the primitive appearance of the clergy, in their long beards, longer tresses, and still longer robes. They certainly carried all the appearance of devout ministers of religion.

I had intended, from Novgorod, a visit to Mr. Glenny, at his establishment, eight miles distant, on the banks of the Veshora. Not finding him, however, I put up at a farm-house for the night, having previously drunk kuass at a convent, paid a rouble for charity, and received a blessing upon entering Muscovy—not without a hope that I should find better treatment here than in Esthonia. Next day, passing over a wild dreary waste to Zaitzova, a pleasant town, of fifteen hundred inhabitants, I put up at a civil house, if the admission of both sexes and of all ranks and dispositions, may deserve such a term: the variety was indeed ludicrous enough, but the conduct and conversation not of a nature to be described.

The women of Muscovy hitherto appear civil and cleanly dressed, though disfigured by the abominable custom of tying their breasts as low, flat, and tight, as possible. The men appear equally civil, obliging, and hospitable, but almost equally disguised, by their swaddling coat of cloth, or sheep skin, coloured trowsers, and immense boots, sash round the body, a wide rimmed hat, and long beard. This mode of dress certainly gives them something of a ferocious appearance.

On the road to Yedrova, I received two roubles as charity from the master of a post-house, from whom also I had received refreshment gratis. I had declined the money, and, as I thought, with success, but on my arrival at the next station, found it in my cap: this is, indeed, real benevolence.

The canals are observable to the east, and present a beautiful appearance from the neat town of Yedrova; reached Vishney-Volotchok, late at night, a large scattered but flourishing town, formerly an imperial village, but enfranchised by Catherine, with canals uniting the trades of the Caspian and Baltic seas. I had previously crossed the Valday hills, which are the only elevations between the two capitals. They are in the government of Novgorod, as is also the Valday lake, nine miles in circumference. It has an island in its centre, on which stands a handsome monastery, which, with its steeples glittering through the dark foliage of its intervening woods, forms a beautiful and interesting object. There is also a little town of the same name on its banks. The land here rises into gentle eminences, with a good deal of cultivation.

Torjock was the next flourishing town which I reached, amid rain and thunder. This slight impediment, which broke up my travelling for the day, richly compensated the delay, by introducing me, first, to an excellent supper, gratis; and, secondly, to a beautiful and kind-hearted young widow, sister of the unfortunate Captain Golovnin, who was so

inhumanly exposed in a cage at Japan. The master of the public-house had civilly received me, and I was enjoying my own meditations, when Mrs. Golovnin entered my room, accosting me in German, French, Russian, and, lastly, in my native tongue. After the manner of her sex, she got all my secrets out of me,—but one,—and in return sent me some tea, proffering, at the same time, the assistance of her purse. Had she offered me her hand and heart, I certainly should have replied otherwise than I did, for I felt very affectionately towards so kind and lovely a woman, and who, although a widow, had yet scarcely passed her teens. Upon getting up in the morning, I discovered that my knapsack had been searched, and my linen taken out and washed, but not the smallest article was missing.

I refreshed myself at the fount (which is always at hand in a Russian cottage, with a tea-kettle or other spouted vessel hanging over it), breakfasted, and, making my *congé* to the household-gods in the near corner of the room, departed from Torjock. I had not proceeded far, when I met a carriage, and immediately heard myself addressed in the English language,—" How do you do, Captain Cochrane?" On my acknowledging the name, the carriage stopped, and the owner, who proved to be a Mr. Hippius, and had for some time been on the look out for me, treated me very heartily to a biscuit and glass of wine. I then wished him a plea-

sant journey and resumed mine, light as a lark at the unexpected pleasure of seeing English faces, and hearing my own tongue.

My way lay over a country where the Tver is a wandering stream, and where numerous handsome seats and neat villages made their appearance. These, however, but too strongly reminded me of the effects of absenteeship in Ireland, being evidently in a rapid state of decay. I have no hesitation, however, in saying, that the condition of the peasantry here is far superior to that class in Ireland. In Russia, provisions are plentiful, good, and cheap; while in Ireland they are scanty, poor, and dear, the best part being exported from the latter country, whilst the local impediments in the other render them not worth that expense. Good comfortable log-houses are here found in every village, immense droves of cattle are scattered over an unlimited pasture, and whole forests of fuel may be obtained for a trifle. With ordinary industry and economy, the Russian peasant may become rich, especially those of the villages situated between the capitals, both of which might be supplied by them with butter and cheese; whereas at present not a dairy exists, the peasantry contenting themselves with the culture of as much land, and the breeding of as many cattle, as may be sufficient for their immediate wants. The women I have always found engaged in some employment; they make very good coarse woollen cloths and linens, as well as knit

stockings and spin thread. The whole work of the house is thrown upon them, while they also partake the labours of the field. I will not certainly recommend, for the adoption of any civilized countries, the treatment they receive from their lordly masters. Having mentioned Ireland in comparison with Russia, I may remark, that both countries may fairly vie with one another in the ancient savage virtue of hospitality.

Reached Tver the following day, and put up at the habitation of a long-bearded merchant; where, after enjoying a good supper and sound sleep, I employed myself in perambulating the city. It is said to contain fifteen thousand inhabitants, being considerably larger, or at least more populous, than Novgorod. Tver is situated at the junction of two small rivers, which empty themselves into the noble Volga, the latter hence taking an easterly course towards Nishney Novgorod, and fertilizing, in its course to the Caspian, some of the finest provinces in the Russian empire.

The first circumstance which attracted my notice upon reaching Tver, was at the gate, where an impost of three large stones is levied upon every horse that passes. These are converted to the paving of the city; nor will the tax appear either slight or useless in a country where stones are not very abundant.

Crossing the river over a fine bridge of boats, I entered the principal part of the city. The public

edifices on the banks of the Volga are handsome, and kept in good order, though the archbishop's palace resembles one of our workhouses. There is also a theatre, good barracks, and a beautiful building called the Prince's Palace, rebuilt by Catherine. The cathedral is of plain stone; there are, besides, thirty-four churches and three convents,—two for men and one for women; three hospitals are established upon a liberal plan, and a bazaar, with handsome piazzas, forms the city lounge. The public gardens and walks are certainly susceptible of improvement; but upon the whole it has a clean and regular appearance, and bids fair, from its trade and situation, to become an important city. The government exports immense quantities of grain from hence to St. Petersburg, and two hundred barges were now lying off the city loaded with that article, and with several millions of eggs.

A young Frenchman, who had been five times wounded in the battle of Borodino!!! accompanied me in my rambles. He prefers, it seems, to remain here teaching his native language, rather than return to his native country. He murmured a little at the facility with which his scholars acquired the tongue; remarking also, what I believe is now generally acknowledged, the general aptitude of the Russian, whether in learning or teaching. I visited, among other things, a canal, which the last of the independent princes projected and began, to shorten the communication, as well as to

form a winter haven for the barges and other small craft, which were, and indeed are still, exposed to considerable danger from the ice in the Volga. A mile only is wanting to complete this great and useful undertaking, in the junction of the Tmak and Volga. Of the earth thrown out during the excavation, has been formed at once a good road, and a strong rampart to the city.

It was at Tver that I first began to comprehend any thing of the Russian hierarchy. It appears that the Greek church admits of two distinct classes and degrees, which may be called monastic and lay orders: to the first of which belong metropolitans, archbishops, bishops, archimandrites and egoomens or abbots; to the second, protopopes or deans, priests, archdeacons, deacons, clerks, and readers. Each provincial capital has an institution to which all the sons of the clergy are admissible, to study the principles of their theology, and moral philosophy, and are afterwards turned over to the general college, to complete their education, either for a military or an ecclesiastical life. If the former be adopted, they enter the army with the rank and pay of an officer; if the latter, they are ordained deacons. The obligation of marriage is imposed upon all those who are below the degree of an egoomen or abbot; and should the wives die before their ordination as priests, they are for ever precluded from that order. But if the wife of a *priest* dies, he may nevertheless

become a dean, and if he afterwards enters a monastery he may arrive at the highest degree. Should however, the theological disciple be determined upon a state of celibacy, he may at once enter the monastic order, and become possessed of the power of a priest, as well as of the highest degree, but he can never afterwards become a disciple of Hymen. The revenue of a metropolitan does not exceed eight hundred pounds a-year, that of an archbishop six hundred, and of a bishop five-hundred,—sums apparently as small as persons of their rank can possibly subsist upon, even in Russia. They are, however, allowed a considerable sum which is paid to them annually, for the purposes of charity.

On Monday, the 5th June, I quitted Tver for Moscow, passing sometimes along the banks of the Volga, at others over a rich grain country, amusing my mind alternately with the contemplation of the promising crops, and the thousands of loaded barges destined to bear them. Reached Davidova (thirty-two miles) at two o'clock, where I stopped to refresh, passing on my way a great number of pedestrian labourers, who, like the Gallegos of Spain, were travelling to the southward to assist the less populous districts in getting in the harvest. An amazing quantity of timber was felled and felling on the road-side. merely for the purpose of keeping the road in repair; nearly the whole distance from Novgorod to Moscow being a wooden causeway. At eight in the evening I continued my route, reach-

ing Klinn at midnight, and Peski at four in the morning. The country had a pleasing appearance, immense herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, with well-peopled villages, greeting the eye in every direction. I was supplied with plenty of black bread, milk, salt, and kuass, which I found very excellent fare. Passing through Tschornaya Graz, I entered Moscow at eight in the morning, the last stage being distressingly fatiguing. Much rain fell, and I was not a little happy to reach the hospitable abode of Mr. Rowan in time to breakfast.

The landscape on the approach to Moscow, from the Petersburg side, gives no promise of so great a metropolis, it being over a dreary and desolate waste. Nor does the immense and ancient capital itself make its appearance until the traveller is within two miles of it; when, upon rounding a small low copse, sprinkled with a few genteel dwellings, hundreds of spires and steeples, domes and towers, flash upon the eye,—one vast assemblage of buildings rising in the foreground, and only the uncultivated Sparrow-hills upon the right.

After breakfast, I waited upon his excellency the governor-general, and arranged my papers so as to allow the resumption of my journey at leisure, and then perambulated the city. Among others, the great gun, in whose muzzle I sat upright, as well as the greater bell, bespoke my attention.

I shall not enter upon the discussion of the many

and strange stories of which this bell has been the subject; but on the assertion of the learned Dr. Clarke, that the Russian nation might as well attempt to suspend a three-decker, with all her apparel, tackling, &c. I would only observe, that no nation possesses better means for performing such a feat, nor has any nation made a better use of such means than Russia; they are, I should think, qualified to remove as large or as weighty a body as any other nation in Europe. The Russians, forty years ago, transported, from the frontiers of Europe to the north-east of Asia, cannon, anchors, and other heavy articles, belonging to an expedition about to explore the Icy Sea, and all went over land for a distance of about seven thousand miles. I have seen similar exertions in Canada, but by no means superior; and it must not be forgotten, that any thing can and will be done in Russia when the order is accompanied with those almighty words, "kacknee bouid"—which truly means, "any how", but is generally used in the sense of, "it must be done."

It will not be supposed that I should omit to visit the Kremlin, which is still an extraordinary place. Although much of its singular appearance has been obviated in the restored buildings, yet it is still far from regular. The view from the tower of St. John is still preserved, that building having withstood the fury of the general conflagration. The new imperial palace is wholly undeserving the name; and only that a building is wanted upon

the site on which it stands, would call loudly for another fire-brand. Of course I conformed to the general custom, in taking off my hat as I passed under the holy gate, and again on visiting the little chapel of Peter the Great. In every other respect than that of population, I found Moscow the same as in Clarke's time, beautiful and rich, grotesque and absurd, magnificent and mean. But besides these general features, there is, at present one, arising from latter circumstances, the city being only half built, and the streets half finished; and brick and mortar every where incommoding the passenger. Such is the appearance of Moscow, which is yet very surprising, considering how recently it has risen from its ashes.

The former number of churches, chapels, and mosques (the forty-forties) is now reduced to less than half the number. Of public and private hospitals, there are several. The most remarkable, is the Foundling, which escaped the fire—a noble, and well endowed edifice. The averaged number of infants received, one year with another, is estimated at five or six thousand. Not more than two-thirds of these are understood to be reared. What, besides the ordinary dangers attendant on exposure, principally, of course, in the night, and in such a climate, may be the cause of this mortality, I know not, and it would be evidently foreign to my object to inquire.

The hospitals of Count Sheremetoff and Prince

Galitzin, are monuments of private beneficence and humanity. The former has two hundred and fifty patients within its walls, independent of out-door pensioners. Persons of all nations, and of both sexes, and with whatever disorders they may be afflicted, are admissible for cure; and the old, and infirm remain for life. A physician, surgeon, inspector, apothecary, and proper attendants, are settled on the establishments with handsome salaries and apartments. The buildings are spacious, and elegantly modern. The wards are small, containing but eight patients; a novel, though perhaps an improving feature in a medical establishment, as evidently tending to the diminution of contagion. The rooms are well ventilated. The revenue is one hundred and fifty thousand roubles, derived from the property of eight thousand peasants, besides lands and villages. The late Count is said to have founded the hospital, in consideration of the Emperor's permission to marry one of his own female slaves. The present young Count deserves much credit, for having improved the rents, and extended the privileges of the hospital.—That belonging to Prince Galitzin is on a similar plan, although not quite so extensive.

Moscow is said to stand upon more ground than any city in Europe, which may very well be true, as almost every palace or nobleman's house has a garden, and all wooden houses are detached, from the fear of fire. The present population is reckon-

ed at three hundred and fifty thousand souls. On the 30th of May I quitted Moscow, in a drosky, accompanied by Mr. Rowan, to dine with a Scotch gentleman, a Mr. Rogers, who manages the agricultural part of Count Romanzoff's property, in the English style, which has been introduced with great success. We afterwards visited the beautiful botanical garden of Count Razumosky, called Gorinkay, which does infinite credit to the superintendance of Dr. Fischer. The number of its plants, thirteen thousand, would alone recommend it to the botanist, as will the buildings and pleasure grounds to that of the inferior savans. Two more patriotic noblemen than these two do not exist.

From my highland companion I received a pair of leather trowsers, and parting with my amiable and universally beloved friend Mr. Rowan, commenced my journey on foot. Passed, at two miles, the magnificent chateau of a Prince Galitzin—(the great number of these princes must excuse my specification of them); after which, amid heavy rain and thunder, I passed through several small villages to Bouncova, lying in a well cultivated and picturesque country. I was greatly fatigued with twenty-five miles of heavy walk, and felt indeed a little melancholy. After a night's rest, however, I resumed with revived spirits, and reached Vospuche. The country is interesting, and adorned with many residences belonging to the lords of the village, but which are going to ruin as fast as time and neglect

can push them. To Uchekittinah is hill and dale, wood and water, all the way. I arrived at Vladimir in time to breakfast, travelling during the night to escape the heat of the sun. My way of life had evidently excited an interest in the peasantry among whom I passed, several of them dividing their meals and sharing their fire and dwellings with me, with the most cordial good-will.

I might nevertheless have considered myself fortunate if I could have reached Vladimir with only a sound drubbing instead of a broken head, merely because I could not ask in the Russian language for some kuass and fire to light my pipe. To prevent the recurrence of this evil, on the next occasion I entered a house, *sans ceremonie*, and helped myself. My hostess instantly dashed the cup into the street, and with the assistance of others of her sex drove me after it at the end of broomsticks, which were besides not spared upon my back. The odds were fearful against me; I was therefore content to bear my punishment without resistance. At the next place, a decent chop-house in Vladimir, I enquired of a servant who spoke French, the character of my persecutors, and learnt that most of those villages are inhabited by Raskolnicks or Schismatics, who have, in a manner withdrawn or separated from the Greek Church, and admit of even less toleration than the Church of Rome. They are bound by the rules of their religion, to deny food, fire, and water, and every assistance to all who

are not of their own persuasion; and are even forbidden to hold any intercourse with them. Notwithstanding the repulsiveness of these tenets, they are said to gain many thousands of proselytes every year. They are considered good agriculturists, and of the most sober and industrious habits, never drinking ardent spirits, nor using tobacco. Among themselves they are a kind friendly people, and excellent fathers and husbands, but towards the rest of the world are—what I too certainly experienced.

Vladimir is a fine city on the banks of the Kliasma, the capital of a small province only, although formerly of all Ducal Russia. Its situation is beautiful, standing on a considerable eminence which overhangs the river, and commands a fine view of the surrounding country. There are still remaining many traces of its former greatness, as the royal palace and gardens, a range of public offices, and several handsome churches. The day was hot, and I took advantage of it to wash and dry my linen, after which I lay down under the bridge, and enjoyed a sound sleep. In the evening I resumed my route towards Nishney Novgorod.

The road was a heavy one, and when I had passed seven versts, all signs of cultivation ceased. By midnight I reached Soudogda, and at two the next day, Morshok, over a low, *sandy*, and dreary country, covered with *brush*-wood, furnishing nothing but materials for *crack* ships. In the evening, at Dratchevo, my passports were demanded by

two young men, whom I somewhat hastily set down as troublesome fellows, because no entreaties could induce them to allow my proceeding without my passport being inspected by the general of brigade. I was, however, more than a little ashamed of my pertinacity, on being sent to a comfortable lodging, followed by a hot and substantial supper. In the morning I received a message to attend the general, with whom I breakfasted; and in consideration of having been detained all the night, which was my time of travelling, was favoured with a vehicle as far as Mourom. This is the principal rendezvous of the Mordva Tartars, bearing the name of a city, but undeserving of that of village, being a vast assemblage of unsociable huts, with six or seven churches. Its situation, on the Oka, is the only thing in its favour.

Having hired a canoe, I paddled across the river, and following a dreary and marshy country, reached Manacovo. At a pretty little village on the banks of a lake, at midnight, I was greatly charmed with the singing of some boys and girls, accompanied by a simple instrument, called, in Russian, baalaalaika, and which is in fact only a two-stringed guitar. The effect of this rude harmony, softened by its passage across the water, was peculiarly sweet.

The beauty of the night prompted me to continue my route, and I left the happy villagers for Pogost, twenty-four miles, where I arrived half famished and quite fatigued, not having tasted food

during twenty-four hours, and a march of forty miles. I had, however, drunk abundantly, perhaps incautiously, of water. The country was level and fertile, well wooded, and somewhat pretty in its scenery. Nor is the town of Pogost by any means an ill built one; its annual fair had just terminated, and I could not help smiling at the remnant of saleable articles, consisting of horses, carts, wheels, saddlery, and, in short, every constituent and requisite for ordinary vehicles, besides an abundance of common earthenware; rope; with kuass and bread to refresh the sober, and barrels of spirit to stupify the drunkard—of which, indeed, there was no scarcity, either of men or women.

Being too jaded to proceed farther, I thought myself fortunate in being able to pass the night in a cask. Arrived at Paulovo, distant fourteen miles, over a cross road, and a beautiful as well as fertile valley, studded with villages, in the midst of which the Oka makes its course.

Paulovo is placed in a bay on the left bank of the Oka, which is crowded with small vessels. It is said to contain eight thousand workmen, and is the private property of General Sheremetioff, the head of which family, a minor, is possessed of one hundred and sixty thousand peasants. The general's property is however a vile dirty place, but the surrounding country, and the view of it from the palace, is very fine.

I had not an opportunity of viewing the immense

iron works here carried on, being anxious to get on towards Nishney Novgorod, which I entered on the evening of the next day. I had previously passed through Selo-Bogorodskoye, where I underwent a second lecture for smoking in the village. The elder of the village spared me, doubtless, however, on the same grounds as had excused me on a previous occasion. The country appeared extremely populous, and I felt highly pleased with my walk on the elevated banks of the Oka, and in witnessing its numerous establishments of tanners and dyers, with such extensive iron-works, that the neighbourhood of Paulovo has been justly termed the Birmingham of Russia.

The entrance to Nishney Novgorod is execrable, from the extreme filthiness of the suburbs; but descending a steep hill, I found myself in a busy and crowded market, where I procured a droshky, and proceeded to the dwelling of Baron Bode, to whom I carried a recommendatory letter. He received me kindly, placing me for board and lodging in his own house. The city is large, scattered, and somewhat ill built, but evidently improving. This is evinced by the number of new buildings which have been erected, in consequence of the celebrated fair called Makarieff being transplanted hither. The upper part of the city, in which the governor, chief officers, and military reside, is of course the best. Its situation is peculiarly pleasant and airy, though surrounded by the stubborn remains of the old ci-

tadel and Tartar wall. The lower town, which may be termed the St. Giles's of the city, is occupied principally by persons engaged in merchandise.

Nishney Novgorod, in contradistinction to Great Novgorod, owes its existence to the great duke Vassil, who thus named it when he caused its inhabitants to be transplanted therefrom the great city before named. Its inhabitants, Russians and Tartars, amount to fifteen or sixteen thousand, though its visitors during the fair probably make its population at that time from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and fifty thousand. Among them may be seen Chinese, Persians, Circassians, Armenians, Tartars, Bucharians, Jews (of course), and a specimen besides of almost every European nation. The fair, in point of value, is considered as second to none in Europe, the business done being estimated at nearly two hundred millions of roubles. This computation may probably allow a deduction of about one half, but in any case the government derives from it a considerable revenue. The buildings on the site for the fair are in a forward state, but will still require many years, and several millions of money, to complete. The situation is considered highly eligible, and the plan is by General Betancourt, an eminent Spanish engineer.

The eligibility of the new site is, notwithstanding, fairly questionable, as it is not entirely removed from the danger of an inundation by the Oka, from the

river giving indications, at no distant period, of shifting its channel, in which case the consequences must be fatal. A canal has recently been cut so as to make this part an island, instead of a peninsula as before,—a measure which, in my opinion, contributes to weaken the foundation, because the canal lies streamward of the fair, and consequently, at the rises or freshes of the river, is liable to be completely overflowed. When it is recollected that the last overflowing of the Volga formed a new bank of seven feet high above the common bed of the river between the city and the fair, it is not too much to fear that it may serve to change the course of the river, whose extra rise was last year thirty-five feet. And should the new formed bank prove a solid foundation, and resist for some years the impetuosity of the stream, there will then be no other outlet but the very site of the fair, as it stands nearly opposite to the place where the Oka discharges its waters into the Volga. Many people think, and, it appears to me, reasonably, that lower down the Volga, as at Kazan or Bokorotsk, were more eligible places for the fair, when its removal became indispensable.

Nishney Novgorod is, however, too near St. Petersburg, and too far from Persia, Astrachan, Bucharia, and China, to be conveniently reached in one season, because the latter journeys are against, while the former is with, the stream. Had Kazan

or Bokorotsk been selected, the voyage would have been more nearly equalized, both in time and expense.

I was shewn over the fair by a Spanish gentleman, now an officer of engineers of Russia, and with whose family in Granada I had lately resided. He is married to the daughter of General Betancourt, chief of his department. I dined with him and two other Spanish colonels, as well as a young Muscovy Englishman, the whole party even here, in the very heart of Russia, talking only the Spanish language.

His Excellency the Governor received me with customary attention, but I was not so fortunate as to meet his amiable lady, an Englishwoman. The truth was, her servant would not admit me, judging, no doubt, from the length of my beard and shabbiness of my dress, that I must be a Jew, or something worse. Thus denied, I embarked, in a freak of fancy, on board a lighter bound to Kazan, the better to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the Volga; having previously, and only just in time, been supplied with provisions, and a pair of English shooting shoes, through the kindness of my excellent host Baron Bode.

CHAPTER IV.

The Volga — Makarieff — Kusmodemiansk — Chebacksar — Vutchi — Kazan — Perm — Koungoor — Souksoum, Demidoff's Zavod — Achitskaya Krepost — Krasnooufinsk —Belimbaiefsky Zavod — Ekatherinebourg — Berezofsky— Kamishloff — Tumen — Tobolsk.

I AM now on the magnificent Volga. The lighter on board which I had embarked did not depart for thirty-six hours, and I felt too much of the sailor in me to quit her: in short, I considered myself as one of the crew, working my passage, and as such employed myself. Nothing was demanded of me but to row the boat ashore for the captain, and now and then a glass of vodkey. This I was content to submit to, till I found that some grog and more tobacco, was followed by the demand of still more grog, which my purse could very ill bear. I was therefore very well pleased when the anchor was weighed, and we descended the stream; but so slow was our progress, that we kept the heights of Novgorod in sight for two days, being frequently obliged to anchor, with the ever dunning sound of "Vodkey-Batiushka," or gin, master. The vessel I was in measured about two hundred and fifty tons, perfectly flat bottomed, and drawing but five feet water. At length, losing sight of Nishney Novgorod, we passed many islands and villages, the latter

always on the right bank, and on the left an uninterrupted low moorish heath. The strength of the current I calculated at two knots and a half.

The variety and singular appearance of the different craft on the Volga, not a little surprised and amused me, as well as the innumerable different ways in which they were propelled. The present season of the year, that immediately preceding the fair, is the best for the navigation of the Volga, when barks from one thousand tons to the size of a canoe, all promiscuously float together. They are generally provided with one mast, which, in the largest, may equal a frigate's main-mast. The weight of the mat-sail must be prodigious, having no fewer than a hundred and sixty breadths in it; and yet the facility with which it is managed will bear comparison with that of the Yankies, with their boom main sail in the fore and aft clippers. They are generally worked by from fifteen to forty people. The rudder is a ponderous machine, in many cases suspended from the stern post, and yet towing astern twelve and fifteen feet; the tillers of which I have ascertained from measurement to be from thirty to forty feet long, and all worked by the hand.

The soil on either side is clay and chalk, and the wood fir and birch. The inhabitants of the villages are the inoffensive and ignorant Fins, a race of people more approximating to the character of the Gallegos in Lisbon, than any other class of peo-

ple I have seen. Their great content, and small possessions, are in both a prominent feature. We reached Makarieff, after a tedious and vexatious voyage, vexatious from the annoyance of the horse-flies and mosquitoes. I was fairly put to the alternative, whether, during my sleep, I would be suffocated or devoured. I preferred the former, as smacking more of humanity, wrapping myself up close in a spare sail, with three others of the crew.

Makarieff is the first inhabited spot, from Nishney Novgorod, on the left bank of the Volga; a straggling, and ill built place, although a large monastery at one extremity, appears to strive hard to acquire for it an appearance of respectability. The great fair, which is now held at Nishney Novgorod, was formerly held here; but was removed on the destruction of its site by fire, wilfully, as is supposed. Many vessels, loaded with tallow, hides, and iron, were then lying off it wind bound, rather than work up between the numerous islands, shoals, and sand banks, between this place and Novgorod. I remarked, with pleasure, the knowledge these otherwise ignorant fellows have of the power of the rudder, performing all the close shades, like a fleet of colliers, in the Thames.

At Makarieff I noticed the utmost height to which the Volga had risen last season—being eighteen feet perpendicular height, at one hundred and fifty feet distance from the nearest edge of the river, which is still going down. Having remained at anchor

two days, and paid toll at a place called Vasilisomski, which is a sort of sound, where loaded vessels pay one and a half, and those in ballast one rouble—(no slight sinecure)—we departed with a fresh and favourable gale, passing fleets of vessels, at anchor and under sail. If the trade of the place were to be computed from the number of vessels, without respect to their value, the Volga would indeed be a second Thames.

We soon reached Kusmodemiansk, a large, and populous town, on the right bank of the river, with four neat churches, pleasantly situated at the base and extremity of that chain of lofty hills, which rise in succession from Nishney Novgorod, and here abruptly terminate. The left bank of the river still preserved its desolate and unhealthy appearance. The next halting place was Chebacksar, where the river is very shallow, and encumbered with shifting banks; and here we were again detained by foul winds, as well as the negligence or laziness of the crew, till I began to feel tired of my aquatic excursion, the river offering so very little worthy of notice. I would fain have pursued my route by land, but was prevented by my bag of copper money, which, although its value was not a guinea, was, at least, sixty pounds weight. Leaving it was, of course, totally out of the question: I had, therefore, no remedy but patience.

At Chebacksar I again laid in a stock of provisions, conformably to agreement. It consisted of

barley, rye, flour, with oil, and black bread. I had hitherto messed with the crew, whose diet was wholesome, although rather new to me, consisting of the above flour, boiled, and stewed down with water and oil. He who likes burgoo, must relish casha; and it was with extreme pleasure that I received the spoon into my hand, in my proper turn, to partake of this humble fare. This we did three times a day, and I had the happy consciousness of its perfect cleanliness, as I myself stood cook. Provisions, in general, may be here considered cheap; bread, a halfpenny per pound; beer, a halfpenny per bottle; eggs, three pence per dozen; and milk, a farthing per bottle. Animal food I know nothing about, not having bought any.

Passed the village of Vutchi, placed between two elevated table-hills. A monastery, with four churches, flanked with a thick forest of ever-greens, gave it a pleasing appearance. A boat came alongside from the monastery, with a poor-box, into which I put two pence, no small sum in this part of the world. Upon reaching the little hamlet of Kushuga, our crew quitted us, with bag and baggage, two long bearded gentlemen, taking charge of the craft to Kazan; a trifling incident, but which powerfully reminded me of the necessity of impressment. We were now anxiously looking out for Kazan, and the distant countries became more elevated and well wooded with lofty oaks. Siviatski, with its remnant of an old stone castle, was the last

interesting spot I observed, before I reached Kazan. The left bank of the river, except at the single town of Makarieff, is one universal waste. From the Volga to the city, is about three miles of a low flat, and this I walked on Tuesday the 22d of June, and the 12th day from Novgorod, being about the same time that I should have taken in going by land.

This celebrated city, on nearing it from the westward, greatly resembles Badajos. The extended view, the river in front, the fortress on the left, and the distant elevated lands to the southward. The dirty suburbs, situate on a marshy swamp, the principal residence of the Tartar inhabitants, is the next indication of Kazan; the last was after crossing the Kazanka, when the noblest part of this noble city fronts you in full view. I passed on to the hospitable abode of the learned professor Fuchs.

The extensive province of Kazan is watered by the noble Volga and beautiful Kama. Its population is reckoned at nine hundred thousand, composed of Tartars, Fins, Votiaki, Tchuvoshi, and Russians, and a few Mordvas. Near five hundred thousand of these inhabitants are peasants or slaves, four-fifths of whom belong to the crown, and the rest to the different nobility of Kazan. The trade of the province is said to be great, exporting vast quantities of tanned and untanned leather, besides about two hundred and fifty thousand poods [36 lbs English] of soap, made from the fat of the Astrachan

seals. Potash is also a thriving concern. The gold and silver embroidery of boots, shoes, slippers, bonnets, &c. employ a great number of people. The province is low and wet, and to its acknowledged unhealthiness the impurity of the water greatly contributes. The greatest heat is 29°, and the greatest cold 33° of Reaumur's scale. The Volga is navigable about two hundred days in the year. The province is in general well cultivated, and exports prodigious quantities of corn to the capitals. The revenue is estimated at sixteen millions of roubles [or about 700,000*l.*, a rouble being 10*d.* of our money]; and of these, spirits alone furnish four millions, the consumption of which, in the city only, on a feast day, is said to amount to the value of five thousand roubles, and on ordinary days to about fifteen hundred.

The city of Kazan is considered as second only to the capital, containing nearly forty thousand inhabitants, of which twelve thousand are Tartars. On the present state of the city, it is hardly fair to give an opinion, rising as it is from the ashes of a fire scarcely five years extinguished. It had formerly a cathedral on the site of the ancient mosque, as also a palace; both were destroyed by an explosion in the citadel. The destruction of the city was indeed nearly complete, and it is difficult to conceive how any vestige could remain, a high wind driving a mass of flame over houses built, and streets absolutely paved, with wood. These wooden buildings

and pavements have been discountenanced by the Emperor, who has held out many inducements to build with brick. The city is the seat of an university and archbishop, and has several handsome churches, four of which belong to the Raskolnicks, many Tartar mosques, and seven convents. The church of St. Peter and St. Paul is a handsome stone edifice, erected at the expense of a private gentleman in honour of Peter the Great, in consideration of that monarch's having made his residence a halting-place during one of his journeys. In Kazan also is a church, which gave rise to that beautiful building, the Kazan church, at Saint Petersburg, though its architecture would seem to denote a theatre. I dined with her eminence the abbess, for so she is styled. She had the benevolence to present me with an image of their saint, which was to act as a charm against otherwise inevitable mischief. I accepted it, of course, with due reverence, without any strong faith in its boasted virtues,—an estimate, which, it will be seen by experience was fully vindicated. The lady, the original of this image, lives twelve miles from Kazan, to which, however, she makes an annual visit, and collects, from the credulity of her believers, sufficient to support her the ensuing year.

I visited the Hotel des Nobles, a club formed of the nobility, fifteen or twenty of whom daily dine there, independent of casual travellers, who have free access upon moderate terms. A friendly sort

of intercourse is thus kept up, and the news of the day emanates from the club, in a manner which the servile press dare not attempt. Billiards and cards are the set amusements of the club, it being a custom of Russian idlers to play boston before and after dinner. They then retire to business, or to sleep, meeting again in the evening to repeat the entertainment over a cup of tea. Among the numerous individuals here from whom I received marked attention, I should specially notice the governor and vice-governor; the prince Davidoff, director of the post; and prince Tenisheff, general in the army, and head of a military commission, not forgetting my friend the professor. Both the princes are of Tartar origin, though their character and conduct would do honour to the proudest rank of polished society. I attended a fête given by the latter prince at his villa, seventeen versts from the city. If the learned Dr. Clarke had been living and present, he would have found, in the delicacy and decorum every where prevalent, a strong proof that a Russian country-house *is not now*, at least, such as he has described it.

A Russian prince, count, or baron, descended from a Russian family, is always a nobleman, without any military, civil, or honorary distinction. But no person of those ranks, whose origin has been Tartar, Asiatic, or foreign, has any claim whatever to nobility, beyond the other free individuals of the empire; the title is indeed hereditary, and descends

in the same wholesale manner as in Germany, but it gives no rank or privilege whatever. Without the addition of military or civil rank, title is rather a disadvantage to the possessor, as the empire expects from every man of respectability a three years' service in the army, navy, or civil departments. After this, he may retire with credit; yet, so salutary is the effect of this custom, that the retirement of an officer is of extremely rare occurrence. In case, however, of any change of inclination, they are permitted, within certain limitations, to vary the nature of the service: thus, an officer of the navy may change to the army or civil department—an officer of the army to the civil department, but not to the navy; but, an officer of the civil service can not exchange into either army or navy;—thus, forming a strong inducement to them to commence, at least, with the profession of arms.

A prince is not, from that circumstance, a nobleman, though an officer, of whatever rank, is: and by his becoming a major in the army, or captain of the navy, he entails upon his children, without limit, the rank of nobility. The rank of women in Russia is fixed, like their condition, for better or worse, according to that of their husbands. If a woman not noble marries a slave, she degrades herself to his condition; while a woman slave, becoming united to a freeman, becomes free. But in Russia, every thing is at the disposal of the Emperor: titles, privileges, rank and fortune, are regulated by his will.

And formerly, when it was no uncommon thing for an Emperor to give the benefit of a Siberian air to ministers, counts, and other dignitaries of the empire, it was not unusual to accompany the seclusion with the loss of honours, hereditary rank, of fortune, and even of the very name. The latter circumstance never indeed took place but when the person was charged with a crime. But this arbitrary exercise of power has certainly not occurred during the present emperor's reign, nor would the exercise of such a prerogative be tolerated for any length of time.

The governor of Kazan was good enough to make up a part of my lost time, by giving me a lift towards Perm, and on the 25th of June, I departed in a kibitka, taking a last view of the city from Tzaritzino. Crossed the Kama, which enters the Volga at forty miles below Kazan. The road had been very fine, and the country fertile in corn and flax, the principal productions. The appearance of the crops was good, and the preparations for the harvest cast a lively and agreeable feature upon the journey. I overtook great numbers of men and boys returning to their homes, having carried vessels down the Kama, and thence into the Volga. The country on the east side of the Kama becomes wild and dreary, through forests of fir, birch, and poplars. The weather was sultry, and the mosquitoes troublesome; and there was nothing to delight the eye or interest the feelings, except the numerous

Tartar villages, which lie scattered at every five or six miles distance. Many of the Viatka race, a handsome people, are in the neighbourhood. Although I had ceased for the present to be a pedestrian, I did not, from whatever cause, receive so great civility as I had been accustomed to.

On the 4th day I entered Perm, thoroughly fatigued with the jolting of the kibitka, although the road was very fine, lying invariably through thick woods, with but two towns, and most unprepossessing villages, all the way from Kazan.

Having delivered a letter to the Director of the Post, who understood nothing but Russian, he recommended me to the care and attention of a Mr. Berg, formerly a Lieutenant in the Russian navy, now an author, and a rich man—advantages which seldom accompany each other. His knowledge of the English language, as well as his hospitality and urbanity, made his company highly valuable. He had made the tour of the world with Commodore Kruzenstern, and was consequently able to give me a great deal of useful information.

Perm is the capital of a Province, and a considerable city, built by the Empress Catherine, at the time that great princess increased the number of governments from fourteen to forty-seven; convinced that a due administration of justice could not take place, where the governments are so extensive. The city stands on the right bank of the Kama, covered on three sides by a thick forest

whose treesreach to the very gates of the city. It is regularly and handsomely built, and contains about eight thousand inhabitants; the whole province numbers eight hundred thousand, consisting of Russians, Bashkires, Tcheremiss, Teptery and Vaugoles. The Bashkires, a numerous race, are said to be descendants of the Tartars, who inhabited the district between the Don, the Volga, and the Ural mountains, and are probably of the same family with the Tartars of Kazan. They were originally wanderers, but since their subjection to Russia, have applied themselves to agriculture, and the breeding of cattle, especially of horses. These they have learnt to manage with facility, and even with grace; and yet, even this has not destroyed that, perhaps, most savage of their original habits, the feeding upon their carcases.

Their character is worse than indifferent, being lazy, and tyrannical towards their wives, to whose care, nevertheless, they owe every thing. They are handsome both in form and features, and are fond of medals and fanciful ornaments, or dresses. Both sexes dress nearly alike, in large trowsers, and a loose gown, fastened round the waist, with a silk sash. Their heads are usually shaved, and covered with a cap decorated with embroidery; as are likewise their boots. There is but one public school in Perm, and that of small repute, and the state of society, and of education, in general are at a low ebb; yet Perm is a thriving place, being rich in its

provincial exports, which from the local situation must all go through the capital.

The export of iron is said to equal five millions of poods, which, with six millions of poods of salt, seventy thousand poods of copper, seventeen of gold, and two millions and a half of coined roubles from Ekatherinebourg, form no bad criterion for estimating the riches of the government. Perm yields a gross revenue of ten millions of roubles, which, on a deduction of seven for its expenses, leaves a net revenue of three millions, exactly equalling the copper money and gold collected from the sands of Ekatherinebourg. The soil is in general good; corn is both cheap and abundant, being exported in great quantities. The face of the country is generally level, till nearing the Siberian frontiers, at the base of the Ural mountains, which separate Europe from Asia. The importance of these mountains seems to be little felt or understood by the Russian government, though there can be no doubt of their containing sources of wealth all but inexhaustible.

I left Perm on the 8th of July, on one of the finest roads in the world. At three miles I passed an exceedingly fertile spot, beautifully reflected from the dark woods, which skirt it even to the horizon. Before reaching the first station, I had passed five villages in a delightful walk, the beauty of which did not afterwards diminish, while the Kama seemed to travel by my side. The road is good,

as far as Kongoor, and the country fertile, with hills traversing it in all directions. The valleys are filled with villages, nursed in the bosom of peace, and fed with the abundance of plenty, of which blessings they are not, from their local situation likely to be soon deprived.

Koungoor, formerly the capital of several provinces, has now little or nothing to boast of besides the beauty of its situation. After dinner I reached Sabarsk, a village, eighteen miles, where I put up for the night. It lies in a well wooded country, and whose lands are economised and attended to in a manner worthy of the disciples of Englishmen. Koungoor appears to me to be an elevated level; for I consider that the grand base of the Ural mountains commences from Perm.

From Koungoor I reached Souksoum, Demidoff's Zavod, viz. iron-works, a large, long, but busy place, on the borders of a lake, where is a considerable iron manufactory, as well as distillery. The situation is in a deep hollow, surrounded by thickly clad hills of fir. Unlike the people of Kazan, I found the inhabitants a churlish race; but being in good health and spirits, I took little heed, simply shewing my passport and open order to the police as a hint for proper treatment. The elder of the village and I were, however, sure to be good friends; so long as milk, black bread, and kuass, with sometimes soup were to be purchased. To these were added, a glass of cordial

at the kabak or gin-shop, procured gratis by an order from the farmer-general, and which latter I divided with my friend.

As I approached the frontiers of Siberia I began to give way to groundless though perhaps natural apprehensions; and indeed as I neared such a scene of cruelty and misery I became completely agitated. Hitherto Providence had protected me, but although I felt thankful for the past, I could not but be concerned for the future, reasonably doubting how, where, and when my pilgrimage would end.

Pursuing my route, I reached the sixth station, charmed with the beauty of the surrounding scenery. And if I might judge of the number of its inhabitants by the quantity of cultivated land, I should say it was one of the most populous, as well as finest spots I had ever seen. Achitskaya Krepost was the next large village with a good post-house. Hence the road turns off to the south, to the summit of a range of hills, which commanded an extensive prospect of a lovely scene, to which a slight fall of rain had given increased freshness, brilliancy, and beauty. I passed a large unemployed distillery, the property of the government, as indeed are all others on this side the Ural mountains, the government having monopolized the sale of spirits throughout the European dominions. If the mere increase of the public revenue may warrant such a measure, there can no more be said. But whatever may be the direct benefit to the treasury of

carrying on business to the amount of thirty millions of roubles per annum, its mischievous tendency in enriching a few individuals at the expense of as many thousands, is incalculable. By farming the distilleries, a system of plunder is practically encouraged, while the losers in the long run are the poor peasantry, who receive a trash of spirit, far below the proof, it being to my knowledge doubly and trebly watered: nor can the retailers of such stuff get back their money in any other manner.

The situation of a vice-governor thus becomes one of the greatest value, receiving in some instances half a million of roubles, or upwards of twenty thousand pounds sterling, a-year. Two direct means of a governor's enriching himself are, the per centage upon every vedro or anker of spirits sold in the province, and a certain sum paid by the retailers for their licenses. By these alone, a vice-governor may put into his own pocket not less than four hundred thousand roubles. It is the duty of a vice-governor to visit the different distilleries and kabacks, or gin-shops, to ascertain whether the spirits be adulterated: having already received his bribe from the farmer-general of the province, he of course finds no fault. The latter of these gentlemen then makes his own visit, to examine whether the retailers have not still more adulterated it than was allowed in the first instance: the affirmative is a matter of course, but on a division of the spoils,

no fault is found. Lastly, comes the secretary or clerk of the farmer-general, who finds the spirit still further adulterated, and who having in his hands the power of punishment, even to the withdrawing of the license, becomes a participator of the last spoils. To make up these immense subductions, another and another portion of water is added to the spirit, all of which is valued to the poor peasant as genuine. The oppression, before heavy enough, is thus doubled upon him, as the weaker the spirit, the more he finds it necessary to consume. This system of robbery is mainly owing to the palpably inefficient provision made by the government for officers of all ranks, who are thus tempted by indirect means to seek a compensation for their services.

Krasnooufinsk, which I reached next, is situated in a fertile valley at the foot of two peaked mountains. It is a scattered and ill-built place, but in a fine productive country, and from the top of the mountains commands an extensive view of the river Ufa, meandering from one side of the horizon to the other, but generally immersed in one continuous fog. The town is frequently overflowed, and thence, doubtless, is considered unhealthy. The establishment is new, for the old ostrog, or advanced fortress, is still kept up, to oppose any possible incursion of their southern neighbours.

A deputation of the inhabitants waited upon me, to request I would remain a couple of days, to be present at a dinner to be given in honour of the

first Englishman who had visited the place. I felt the compliment, nationally, but thought best to decline it, as perfectly unmerited by the individual, and returned to Achitskaya Krepost. Thence to Bisserskaya Krepost, over eighteen miles of uncultivated country, after which I gently ascended a considerable elevation into the bosom of the Ural mountains, where not a vestige of cultivation exists besides young firs and birch. The air was exceedingly cold on the summit. At noon I stopped at the last European station, called Kirgishantsky Krepost, and at the last European residence, where I dined. The good people had resolved I should not leave this paramount quarter of the globe with any trace of dissatisfaction, and young children continually presented me with wild strawberries and cream: the strawberries were of an excellent flavour, and it is the custom of these poor people to present the traveller with such fruit during the season. I received the present, standing with one foot in Asia and the other in Europe, surrounded on all sides by lofty mountains, covered, however, with nothing but brush wood.

In the evening I reached the first station in Asia, called Groborskoy, a post-town, and next day, with a stout heart, descended the Siberian part of the Ural chain, to Belimbaiefsky Zavod, or Iron Foundry, on the banks of the Tschusova, where there are many handsome buildings. Early the ensuing morning I reached Ekatherinebourg, having pass-

ed in safety the mighty barriers which divide Europe from Asia. The ascent and descent are so nearly imperceptible, that were it not for the precipitous banks every where to be seen, the traveller would hardly suppose he had crossed a range of hills. As far as this frontier town of Siberia, I had travelled through one continued forest of pine-trees, and for twenty miles nothing met the eye but fire wood, grown for the use of the Imperial fabricks.

On reaching the Asiatic side of the Ural chain, I could not help remarking that the inhabitants of all the villages were much more civil, more hospitable, and more cleanly dressed; and in no one instance would they accept of money for the food I had occasion to procure. I never entered a cottage, but shtshee (a cabbage soup), with meat, milk and bread, were immediately placed before me unasked; nor could any entreaty of mine induce them to receive a higher reward than a pipe of tobacco, or a glass of vodka (whisky). In short, to prevent uselessly troubling the inhabitants, I was obliged to consign my nearly exhausted purse to the care of my knapsack, renouncing the hacknied and unsocial custom of paying for food.

Among other proofs of their civility, or rather of the interest which Russians take in foreigners, as well as the means they have of making themselves understood, one very strong one occurred to me in a small village. I had learnt so much of the

language, as to know that *kchorosho* is the Russian word for *well,* but not that *kchudo* was the translation for *bad.* My host being a good sort of a blunt fellow, was discoursing upon the impropriety of travelling as I did. As I could not comprehend him, I was impatient to go, but he persisted in detaining me till he had made me understand the meaning of *kchudo.* My extreme stupidity offered a powerful barrier to his design ; but a smart slap on one cheek, and a kiss on the other, followed by the words *kchudo* and *kchorosho* soon cured my dulness, and I laughed heartily in spite of this mode of instruction.

Ekatherinebourg is the key of Siberia, and hence, a post at which passports are most rigorously examined. Yet on making known my intention to stop at the house of a Mr. Major, an Englishman, and an officer in the College of Mines, I was not only permitted to pass, but, in Mr. Major's absence, another lodging was procured me. This was in the dwelling of a Mr. Mohr, a low plodding German, of whom there are too many in Ekatherinebourg. It is a well built city, founded by Catherine, near the source of the Iset, containing fifteen thousand inhabitants. There is a large fabric belonging to the Emperor, for polishing and preparing vases, urns, slabs, and the like, as well as to deposit selections of mineralogy and precious stones for the formation of cabinets. There are also numerous large iron and copper foundries in the neighbour-

hood of Ekatherinebourg, the latter of which supplies the mint of the city with metal for coining three millions of copper roubles annually. The coin is badly executed, being chipped and cracked the first moment it is issued, nor is the metal better; and no care is taken to select or recoin any of this wretched money. The copper mines are near three hundred miles distant from the city; yet here the metal is worked up into ingots, heated, barred, cut, rounded, cleaned, and stamped.

Near the city the river is dammed up so as to form a sort of lake for the washing of the sand, which produces the gold, and close to it is the department for smelting that costly metal. This is produced from the gold mines of Berezofsky, distant twelve miles; the quantity produced is, however, small. The moment a fine specimen of pure gold is discovered, it makes its way into the cabinet of some private individual, and such specimens are neither few in number nor their intrinsic value small. It is justified on the usual ground of the insufficient remuneration of the officers, and at present may be considered as a fair and natural means of the support of government; for the salaries of officers and men, so far from having been increased since the days of Peter the Great and Catherine, have in reality been reduced *three-fourths*. Then the government paid in *silver* roubles (3*s*. 4*d*. sterling)—but now in *paper*, the current value of which is 9½*d*. When the increased value of provisions, and

of all other articles, is considered in proportion with what they were fifty and one hundred years ago, it is only fair to put such pilfering to the account of necessity rather than that of depravity. In the midst of this abundance of natural wealth, the peasant gets but very little reward for very hard work, and as all compulsive labour is reluctantly and badly performed, that, in cold and dreary mines, might be expected to be of all others performed the worst. Six thousand fine young men are employed in this occupation from morn till night through all seasons: and to sustain, certainly not to reward this, receive a daily allowance of two pounds of bad bread, with a suit of clothes and a sum amounting to 13*s.* 6*d.* sterling yearly: whatever they acquire beyond this must be by dishonest means. These six thousand individuals produce annually from the mines and sands about seventeen poods of gold and ten of silver, the united value of which is certainly under £30,000. sterling: so that the clear profit to the government, of each of these able-bodied men, after even these insufficient means of livelihood, cannot exceed 20*s.* a-head. But for the imperious necessity of procuring a continued coinage, in order to support the immense circulating medium, it may be supposed that the Russian government could not hesitate for a moment to enfranchise these peasant slaves; as their contribution to the revenue, in the way of direct taxation, would infinitely exceed the paltry profit

accruing from their coercive labour:—to say nothing of the large proportion which must be deducted for the expenses of an establishment, requiring so great a number of officers, and probably of costly implements.

At Ekatherinebourg, at the table of the amiable chief, I met a Mr. Roper, an Englishman, employed in the mines. After dinner we visited the beds of gold sand. They seemed about six feet deep. The governor appeared to me too sanguine of the results, which can never authorize the employment of such fine young lads in the everlasting washing of the sands, with their feet constantly in water.

From the gold beds I visited the mines of Berezofsky, the principal working one of which, a hundred and sixty feet of perpendicular depth, I descended. My access was, as in other mines, by the staircase, preferring that mode of descent to the more usual one in this place of being let down by the basket. I saw nothing to remark in the nature or plan of the employment, though I could not but regret that the operators were not, as in South America, criminals, but peasants belonging to the Imperial crown. The produce of the mines is in the proportion of one guinea's worth of pure gold for every four thousand pounds weight of earth. Ninety-six zolotniks are equal to a pound, and three zolotniks of gold are produced from each hundred poods of earth; so that even allowing forty pounds sterling for every pound of gold, the utmost value of

every one hundred poods of earth cannot exceed twenty-five shillings. The sum of the matter is, that His Imperial Majesty gets five thousand pounds sterling annually from the employment of six thousand men, deducting only the payment of his officers, a diminution which it will be allowed is not great.

The magnificent iron establishment belonging to the Yakovleff family, is much better deserving of attention. Six thousand peasants are attached to it, and at present employed in making bar iron for the fair of Nishney-Novgorod, iron plates for covering houses, cast iron utensils of various kinds, steam engines, and immense quantities of cutlery, not forgetting the iron images for worship, all finished in a neat and solid manner. The buildings appertaining to this establishment are equally extensive and substantial; and the situation of the overseer, who is a peasant, is worth two thousand pounds per annum! The villages of the peasantry are well built, and much liberality is evident in every part of the concern, which is as profitable as creditable to the proprietor, whose character stands very high.

I have already said that Ekatherinebourg is a well-built city. It indeed abounds in public edifices, bazars, and churches, and is regularly laid out in streets; but the inhabitants generally, even those who may be styled opulent, are slaves, either to the government or to private individuals. The

greatest proportion of these are Raskolnicks, who some time ago sent one of their own body to purchase permission to build a church for the free exercise of their own tenets. The zealous missionary was also charged with four hundred thousand roubles, to make good his way; but neither missionary nor license, nor money, have been since heard of.

Quitting Ekatherinebourg, I directed my steps towards Tobolsk, gratified that I had already entered Siberia. After ten miles of pleasant walking, I reached the hospitable habitation of Mr. Major, where I passed a couple of days in an agreeable manner, with his wife and three daughters, fine young women, and either of them sufficiently beautiful to arrest the progress of a Siberian traveller. Having no time to fall in love, on parting, I took advantage of the Russian custom of allowing them to salute my cheek, and I, in return, kissed their hands.

I reached the second station late in the evening, and next day remarking with pleasure the cleanliness and good nature of the inhabitants, reached Kamishloff. Kaminsky, a useless cannon foundry, lay in my way. The road is every where excellent over low swampy, yet well wooded, ground. Kamishloff is a pretty little town on the banks of the Pyshma, a river but little used, by reason of some falls. There are two thousand inhabitants, occupying a somewhat flourishing carrying trade. I received the kindest attentions from the town major (a

young militaire, who had been severely wounded in the Napoleon campaigns), and from the inspector general, who was then going his rounds. Kamishloff is the last station in the government of Perm. Thence to Tumen, the first station, thirty-six, and the second twenty-six versts,—thirty-five miles in all. The country appeared well cultivated upon a soil of black mould. The third station of twenty-five, and the fourth of twenty-eight versts,—another thirty-five miles, I cleared in good time, but with a somewhat awkward indication of ulcers on my feet. At the last station, a small Tartar village, I was regaled with pork, bread and eggs, at free cost, no purse being necessary among these Tartars. I partook of the wholesome fare *à la Tartare*, shaking hands first with the host, and receiving his blessing of "Peace be with you," then squatting on my hams, like the rest of the company. On the third day I reached Tumen, after near forty miles walking. The town major kindly received and lodged me in his house.

Tumen is a city of some consideration, and from its local situation, enjoys a considerable trade with the fair of Irbit, as well as to the south west and south east of it. Its population is said to consist of eight thousand, occupied mostly in the preparation and export of timber, tallow, hides, and embroidery. It is situate on the banks of the Toura. It owes its celebrity to Yermack, who discovered and conquered the greater part of Siberia. The environs

of the city are fine pastures, and corn lands. With this advantage of soil, added to that of its being a depot or chancellary, as it is called, of the Russian American Company, for the receipt and transportation of their goods, as well as to enlist volunteers, it may be said that Tumen is a place of considerable promise. The banks of the Toura are steep, and the current rapid. The country round is populous, and more than ordinary industry every where observable.

Having crossed a miserable bridge, I reached the first station from Tumen, fifteen miles, where I put up for the night. It was, indeed, a wretched place; but I shall remember it, as affording a specimen of the proficiency I had made in the Russian language. Upon my arrival I demanded the name of the place, and was answered, as I had often been, *Malaya Derevenya*, which I interpreted *little revenue*. In the present case, such a name seemed, indeed, peculiarly appropriate, for certainly the place appeared too poor to contribute any very efficient support to the resources of the empire. The frequency of the reply, however, induced me here to make inquiry, and I discovered my error, the nature of which, however it abashed me at the time, places me in very respectable company—no less than that of the *justly celebrated* and learned Dr. Clarke, who was eternally crossing the river Protok, apparently ignorant that the Protok means neither more nor less than the *branch* of a river.

The second and third stations lay on the banks of the Toura, running through a highly cultivated, and pleasant country, with immense herds of cattle scattered in every direction, and the inhabitants civil, polite, and hospitable, in proportion to their wealth. During the latter part of this walk, I had followed the custom of the place, the same as that in Spain, where I have often wandered with the muletteers, viz. that of sleeping in the open air. They are, indeed, a set of merry, happy fellows—hail fellow well met, this way, or that, rain or shine, nothing comes cross, while the beasts can get good fodder, and the moon does not shine in the eyes. A good fire serves at once to cook the provisions, and drive away the mosquitoes.

The following day I reached the fifth station, thirty-five miles. Here are a few dirty huts in a low marshy country. I had crossed the Toura by a miserable ferry; the breadth of the river two hundred yards, and the rate three, or three and a-half knots per hour. To the eighth station, still a low country, almost inundated from the late heavy rains, which have done considerable damage, the village of Lepofsky being completely washed away. With the river Toura constantly at my side, and the rain almost incessant, I reached the tenth station; and thence to Tobolsk, where I arrived half drowned and famished, at three in the afternoon. I had encountered considerable difficulty in crossing the Irtish, in consequence of the rapidity of the fresh.

The view of the city, and ancient fortress, on arriving from the westward, is very fine, standing on a considerable eminence, which overhangs the river and lower city.

Upon my arrival I searched out the abode of Mr. Rosing, son-in-law to the Governor, and brother-in-law to my late kind host Mr. Berg, of Perm. The family were all at the Governor's, but receiving a note from me, they kindly invited me to dinner; my situation, however, rendered this impossible, as I was all but naked. My second apology brought the host himself, who ordered me every accommodation I needed. In the evening the whole party visited me, from the Governor's, observing, with much kindness, on the delay of my visit, and adding the proverb of Mahomet and the mountain. I gave myself up to the enjoyment of this delightful company, and of my pipe and a glass of punch, and could have fancied myself any where, rather than at Tobolsk.

Formerly this was the capital of all Siberia, afterwards of a province, but now of western Siberia; a Governor-General residing in it, whose jurisdiction comprises that of Tomsk and Omsk, while Irkutsk has also a Governor-General, who rules Irkutsk, Yenisseisk, Yakutsk, Okhotsk, and Kamchatka. Tobolsk is a large and ancient city, at the junction of the Tobol and Irtish, two noble streams, which falling into the Ob, assume its name, and are with them, ultimately lost in the Frozen Ocean. The

inhabitants are estimated at twenty thousand, composed of Russians, Tartars, and Bucharians. A considerable trade is still carried on with China, and Tobolsk may be said to supply all central and western Siberia. It has, however, lost much by the change of route, which formerly led through the city, by which change the caravans have disused it as a halting place on their way to farther Siberia and on their return, the straight road being from Tumen to Tara.

Tobolsk is the see of an archbishop who has jurisdiction over all Siberia. It has many handsome churches but (fortunately) no convents; the streets are paved with wood, and in general the buildings are of the same material. The markets and bazars are well regulated, and the town in general is very clean. The residences of the archbishop, governor-general, and principal officers, as well as the barracks, arsenal, and all public offices, are in the upper part of the city. The position is a most commanding one, a matter of no slight consideration in those times, when convicts were kept in the lower town. Numerous large flocks of cattle are seen in the neighbourhood of Tobolsk: provisions are cheap and abundant—bread thirty-six pounds for a shilling, and the same quantity of meat for three; and hospitality eminently proverbial. But what is perhaps more remarkable, very good society is to be enjoyed here, and the strongest features of content are displayed in this hitherto supposed metropolis of barbarism and cruelty.

The truth is, that Tobolsk is not a place where convicts or malefactors are allowed to remain, but people who are exiled from political causes only; the principal part of whom are officers, who have still the privilege of appearing in public, without the loss of either rank, fortune, or even character. The Governor has it in his power to befriend any individual, himself becoming responsible for his appearance when necessary: and as no government transports or banishes *fools*, Tobolsk may very well be, from this circumstance, a highly civilized and eligible place of residence.—Malefactors and bad subjects are sent to Tomsk and Nertchinsk.

I visited the celebrated fortress built by Yermak, the discoverer and conqueror of Siberia. Several old swords, muskets, and the like are deposited there, which for size and weight might vie with the more famous sword in Dumbarton castle. I also attended an examination at the public military and the provincial schools on the Lancasterian system. The children seemed to have made considerable proficiency in the first rudiments; the schools however are yet in their infancy, though nearly one thousand boys attend. It was indeed gratifying to a patriotic heart to see the institutions of old England adopted in the heart of Siberia—an adoption equally honourable to us, and creditable to Alexander.

The view of the surrounding country from the residence of the Governor, is really sublime, preserving still its ancient wild magnificence. In front

are the noble Irtish and Tobol, joining their waters from the east and south, and continuing their united course through the black and impenetrable forests, till lost on the verge of the horizon: the numerous pasture lands on the opposite bank of the river, with here and there a smoking chimney, enliven the scene, and render the place, with all its surrounding but distant deserts, a really enviable retreat. Immediately under the eye is the river and lower town, with its regularly intersecting streets; all these afford ocular demonstration, that Tobolsk is far from being a dull place; yet, even in summer, the situation is very cold and bleak, being in the latitude of near 59°, and the thermometer, during winter, at times falling as low as 40° and 42° of Reaumur; while on the other hand it is not always free from the opposite unpleasantness of extreme heat.

The climate of the province, generally speaking, is inhospitable, no part but the southern producing grain. The soil is chiefly marl and chalk, except to the north, which is covered with immense tracts of sand. The wood is for the most part stunted in its growth, and such is the poverty of this province, which contains more than a million of souls, that the government receives from it but three millions of roubles nett revenue, or one hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling. Its extent is immense, being from the latitude of 50° to the frozen sea, and near one thousand miles in width. The northern districts are inhabited by Samoiedes and Ostiaks, a wild, barbarous race, who live by

fishing and hunting, enduring all the rigours of winter, sometimes even without fuel. Fishing is also an active pursuit at Tobolsk, near two thousand people being employed upon the Irtish and Tobol. The practice is to ascend the streams before the winter commences, catching and drying the fish as they go, and returning to the city with the breaking up of the ice. This employment, besides providing for the maintenance of those engaged in it, yields a very remunerating profit. The embroidery of muslins is also brought to considerable perfection at Tobolsk, introduced originally by the daughters of exiled officers, who had felt the deprivation of their former means of subsistence; and it is now the prevailing fashion among the ladies. The poorer classes, however, are indolent, and will seldom work beyond what is immediately necessary for the procurement of food; and this may in part account for their suffering some of the richest and most beautiful lands in the world, on the banks of the Irtish, and towards the Chinese frontiers, to lie waste, while they prefer the deserts and forests of the north. To this inducement, however, must be added that of obstinacy and false pride, and, perhaps, some portion of laudable attachment to their native city, which is termed the grand and ancient capital of all Siberia, and which has been the scene of achievements, equal, if not superior to those of Cortez.

CHAPTER V.

Brief History of Western Siberia, and of its Conqueror Yermak—Imalak—Ingeary—Kaminski—Kamisart—Ishim—Tusnabolova—Tukalinsk—Omsk—The Kirgeese—Calmucks—Jeliezinskaya—Yamishersk——Poyanoyarsk—Ubinsk—Uvarova—Alexandrofsk—Bouktourma—Krasnojarsk—Maloi Narymsk—Chinese Frontier—The Irtish—Ustkamenegorsk—Ismayelova—Neighbourhood of the Kolyvan—Kalmanka—Barnaoule—Tomsk—Kioff—Krasnochinsky—Bagota—Atchinsk—Krasnojaisk—Kansko—Ingashe—Nishney Udinsk—Irkutsk.

The early history of this part of the world is involved in much obscurity, little being known of it prior to the beginning of the sixteenth century, when the celebrated Yermak became at once the discoverer and conqueror of Western Siberia. He had originally been the leader of a numerous and well organized banditti, who committed great and distressful ravages on the Don and Volga, but which were put an end to after the victories of Ivan Basilovitch over the Tartars of Kazan and Astrakan, when he devoted his attention to the peaceable establishment of his dominions. Yermak was thus compelled to fly, and sought refuge in the north, on the banks of the Kama, where the family of Strogonoff had a factory for the purpose of barter with the Siberians. The conduct of our hero proved so unlike that of a freebooter, that Strogonoff during

the winter of 1577 provided him with necessaries to subsist his men, and with arms and ammunition to make an incursion upon the Siberians.

The first campaign was in the summer of 1578. Yermak had from six to seven thousand men with him; but through his ignorance of the route, and want of guides, winter closed in upon him almost before the commencement of the campaign. His route lay along the Kama to the entrance of the river Silvar, where he passed the winter in a small town still named after him.

In the spring of 1579 Yermak returned to Strogonoff's establishment, where he received a fresh supply of arms, including a set of colors, ornamented with images after the Russian custom. In the summer he resumed his operations, availing himself of the little rivers Tchsusovaya and Serebranka; the latter of which brought him to the point whence it was necessary to proceed by land. He was soon, however, again obliged to winter in what is termed a krepost, or wooden fortress; his forces, meantime, were fast diminishing by sickness and constant skirmishes.

In 1580 he continued his progress along the little rivers Barancha and Jouraslik, where his forces were reduced to one thousand six hundred and fifty men. With those he sailed down the Tagili, and reached the town now called Tourinsk, and there defeated the Tartar Prince, Epantchy.—On the 1st of August he reached Tsaugy, now Tu-

men, on the banks of the Toura, of which he took possession, and fixed his winter quarters, with only one thousand five hundred followers, but inured to hardships, accustomed to victory, and putting implicit faith in their leader.

The spring of 1581 was marked by two victories over the Tartar Prince, Mahomed Koul. Yermak then marched along the Tobol, till he reached the Irtish, the centre of Koutchum Khan's dominions. His forces were now reduced to five hundred men; yet with these he resolved to conquer or to die. On the 23d October a bloody conflict took place between the armies—when Koutchum Khan and the Prince Meneik Koul were entirely defeated, and narrowly escaped being made prisoners. The scene of action was at the junction of the Tobol and the Irtish, the site of the present city of Tobolsk. Yermak instantly directed his march against Sibir, the capital of the Tartars, distant twelve miles, and on the 26th October entered it in triumph, received the oath of allegiance of his new subjects, and, from the head of a banditti, became a sovereign prince. The situation of Yermak was, however, by no means enviable. He resolved, therefore, to make a tender of his conquest and further services to the Tzar. Accordingly, on the 22d December he despatched his confidant, the Ataman Klotsoff, to Moscow, with the news and message. Klotsoff was received with every demonstration of joy; and special marks of royal fa-

vour were conferred upon the hero and his companions, together with a general pardon for past offences. Yermak himself was honoured with two rich coats of armour, a silver cup, and a fur cloak which the Tzar himself had worn; the last being then considered the greatest mark of distinction in Russia.

Yermak, meanwhile, was not idle. Leaving a part of his small force to garrison and protect Sibir, which seems to have given name to all the Asiatic part of the Russian empire, he, with the assistance of his favorite, Briazga, extended his conquests to the countries of the Ostiaks and Vogouls, near to Samaroff and Tabarinsk.

In the sequel, Yermak undertook an expedition for the purpose of subjugating the surrounding territories, and annihilating the remainder of the Khan's followers. Attended by three hundred Cossacks of the Don, he reached the settlement called Ambashoo; but here received information which induced him to retrace his steps towards the new capital. He reached in safety a canal which had been cut by his directions as a species of defence, as well as for the shortening of the communication; and here he passed the last night of his extraordinary career.

The inclemency of the weather, the fatigues they had undergone, and the apparent security of the situation, all operated to plunge the party in profound sleep; even the guard was overcome; when Koutchum Khan, who had cautiously and

unobserved, followed and watched his enemy, fell upon them sword in hand. Never was a greater scene of tumult, or a night victory more complete, than that gained by the Tartars; and Yermak's whole party, with the exception of himself and one man, were cut to pieces. Finding all lost, Yermak fled to the river, and in attempting to jump into a boat, fell into the water, and was drowned—the weight of his armour preventing his swimming. Thus perished, after seven years of constant warfare, this enterprising and valuable leader, in the night between the 5th and 6th of August 1584. According to tradition, his body was afterwards found and buried near the promontory of Bageeshefsk, under a large fir-tree, not far from the Irtish, near which a cross is erected.

For a while the Russian empire in Siberia was at an end, as the remains of his small band, which had been left as a garrison at Sibir, together with the single individual who had survived the late conflict, and told the mournful tale, evacuated the fortress, and returned to Russia. The court of Muscovy were not long, however, before they renewed their designs upon the conquest of Siberia. The intestine commotions and divisions of the Tartar princes, who were asserting their relative independence, offered the best prospects of success: and many of the Tartars were pleased with the conduct of the Russians, and perfectly disposed to join them against Koutchum Khan, who

was disliked for his intolerable zeal in propagating the Mahomedan faith. A body of three hundred Russians accordingly penetrated to the Toura without opposition, built the fort of Tumen, and there waited for reinforcements. The subjugation of Tobolsk and Tara followed; and fortresses were there also established. In the short space of a century the whole of Siberia, from Europe to the Eastern Ocean, and from the Frozen Sea to the Chinese frontiers, was annexed to the Russian empire. New towns were built, colonies were planted, and settlements established in the most distant parts. Those tribes of Tartars who were not readily reducible to obedience, were at once exterminated; and something like the same merciless cruelty which characterised the Spaniards in South America, was practised in Siberia. Much more would have been done, and the Russians would no doubt have had possession of all Mongolia, had not the jealousy of the Chinese interfered.

The Russians had extended their thirst for dominion along the banks of the Amour, and were continuing their subjugation of the Tungousian tribes, when they encountered the Chinese who were drawn thither by the same object. From jealousy of each other's conquests, these two great powers became involved in a war about the year 1680, and the fortresses on the Amour became alternately the property of each, as the chances of war dictated. At length, however, the Chinese

power prevailed, and at a peace in 1689, the Russians ceded a considerable territory, together with the navigation of the Amour. The value of this river, at that time unknown, has been fully seen since the discovery of Kamchatka and its adjacent islands, as well as the proximity of continental America, and the Archipelago of islands between. This ceded territory and other valuable points, Russia has never since been able to regain, as, with little exception, the two countries have remained at peace: and thus closes the history of Siberia, till the discovery and conquest of the peninsula of Kamchatka, which took place in the early part of the 18th century.

The above history is in the main a translation of a biographical notice attached to the profile of Yermak on a large map, which was presented to me by my excellent friend the Governor of Tobolsk. It is also to be found in Coxe's account of Russian discoveries.

To return to my journey, for which I had been preparing during the three days I was in Tobolsk, by getting a new leathern water-proof knapsack, and deliberating the route to be pursued. I felt anxious to get on as fast as possible, but yet so as not to miss meeting the Governor-General, who, I was informed, was on his way to Tobolsk, but not by the direct road, his Excellency taking Kolyvan and Omsk in his way. It was therefore determined that I should go first to Omsk, and fol-

low the Irtish as far as the Chinese frontiers; and thence, return by the same river, and proceed to the mines of Kolyvan, where it was to be hoped I might arrive in time to meet Mr. Speranski, the Governor-general. In furtherance of my design, the governor supplied me with a Cossack, and an order for horses if I should deem them necessary, as well as an open order for all assistance to be rendered me, not only in his government, but as far as the capital of the next; his power being understood to extend from capital to capital.

I bade adieu to Tobolsk, with a grateful remembrance of the kindness I had experienced; and, in company with my young Cossack, pursued the road to Omsk. It is not a good one. The country residences of the governor and archbishop were on the right, as also a large monastery which I had visited three days before on the occasion of a fête; but the country generally possesses very little of interest. At twelve miles I passed a second monastery romantically situated; and, upon the road to it, many hundreds of people coming from their annual visit to the Virgin to whom it is dedicated; her ladyship having, during the week, presented herself at Tobolsk to receive her rents. At sixteen miles I reached the village of Imalak, overhanging the Irtish, which, dividing, forms an island, and in such a manner as to present a double serpentine view. The extent of territory seen from the elevated banks is astonishing and beautiful.

I descended the mountain by a steep and dangerous road, then ferried over the Irtish, passing through a large Tartar village situated in a fine pasture, with some rye corn, and reached the second station on the lofty bank of the Irtish. I found the cottages neat and clean, and the inhabitants comfortable, hospitable, and contented, without hope or expectation of reward for their hospitality to me. Thence to Berezofska, the country appears more cultivated and pleasing, with a good deal of fine wood in the valleys. Thence to the Tartar village of Ingeary, on the banks of the Vagay, when I entered a considerable track of their lands, near seventy miles in extent, but without a single Russian inhabitant. These Tartars are of the Bashkire race. I could not help observing the perfect cleanliness of their houses, the civility of the people, and the good economy of their lands. I slept most contentedly in these dwellings; feeding upon milk and cakes.

The dress of the Tartar women is light, if not neat; being merely a plain white shift, with a sash round the waist to support the bosom; besides this they have not a vestige of apparel, except the handkerchief on the head. The young girls had the hair plaited and hanging down like the Biscay girls, or brought up under the left arm, and fastened to the fore part of the shift by a riband. Such is the simple summer dress: the winter, or gala one, is, however, mere tawdry. Their features ap-

pear delicate, but their limbs are strong, and their complexion very dark.

At Kamenski I quitted the great Siberian road, not far from Tara, passing several neat Tartar villages, whose white plastered chimneys and ovens reminded me a little of those in my own country. The furniture consists of a few earthenware utensils, and a set of tea things: one half of the room is elevated above the other about fourteen inches, and that half serves them alike for sitting, sleeping, and store-room. They are particular in having clean bedding, and many pillows; the latter of which are always presented to a stranger to raise and soften his seat, as they have neither chairs nor stools. A Tartar dwelling has always, if possible, attached to it the convenience of a vegetable garden. The women, I observed, never presume to eat or drink till their better or worse half has finished, and then but seldom while in their presence.

Reached Aramashansky, near the Vagay, which winds its waters through many fertile spots. At Kamisart I met much incivility, not being permitted to pass the night in it, without having recourse to severe measures; to avoid which I preferred continuing my journey in the rain. This part of the country appears well cultivated, and better peopled; nor is it void of interest,—for the account of its scenery, described in the well known tale of "Elizabeth, or the Exiles of Siberia," is, on this point, very correct. Crossed the little river Cara-

sal to Besroocoouva, a fine level pasture plane, feeding immense quantities of cattle; thence to Ishim, which I reached at four in the evening, in a torrent of rain, much fatigued, and my Cossack more so:—he was, in fact, perfectly useless.

Ishim, so celebrated in the novel, is a miserable town on the stream of its own name, deserving remark here only for the incivility of the inhabitants, who, with the commissary and the doctor, were all noisily intoxicated. Of course I could get no attention paid me, either as to lodging or food; and though the rain fell in torrents, I and my Cossack were obliged to pass the night in the market place.

Next morning we reached a neat village called Borovaya, where I was hospitably entertained by the elder of the village, who also furnished me with horses to Tusnobolova (twenty miles), where the long bearded guard searched my baggage; alas, it contained little; and for once I felt ashamed at the examination. They did their duty in a civil manner, but I was much puzzled to think what they could be in expectation of finding. The country is open, and laboriously cultivated, and the neighbourhood populous. Much fine wood, and some fishless lakes are also to be seen. I overtook a party of unfortunates exiled for misdemeanors, and compelled to live in this district, which is hence the general rendezvous of pick-pockets, &c. At the neat village I happened to be quartered at the house of a newly married couple; and I confess I regret-

ted the law, which compelled them to quit their bed and room for me. To this sacrifice, however, they submitted in the most cheerful manner, putting before me bread, milk, and eggs, and, indeed, whatever the house could furnish. Through a succession of happy villages I reached Tukalinsk, over an uninteresting level of pasture land. The wretched external appearance of the cottages is more than counterbalanced by the neatness within; and if half a dozen healthy and beautiful children be any indication of content, then are the inhabitants of this district most happy. The price of bread is one shilling, and of meat three, for forty pounds. The road is, in general, very good.

At Tukalinsk I had the misfortune to lose what was to me my all,—my passport, papers, and every protection in Siberia. In vain I addressed the commissary; in vain I offered a guinea for their recovery; in vain I pointed out the rogue who had taken them in the tin case from the seat while I was at dinner. I begged, entreated, insisted, threatened, abused;—all was to no purpose; and I was finally constrained to go without them. By this terrible disaster I was entirely deprived of all testimony of myself, my connexions, or the object of my journey, and lay at the mercy of any one who might choose to provide me with large but cheap lodgings.

My route towards Omsk was over a similar pasture plane as far as the eye could reach, with scarcely

the appearance of a shrub. At Sukofski, the drunken postmaster would have made me like himself, but, in such rainy and dreary weather, I preferred tea. I next crossed over to a little village called Krasnoyarsk, on a stream which unites with the Irtish, now again visible, after an absence of two hundred miles. I at last got view of the fortress of Omsk, and having reached the Irtish, passed from a most dreary into a highly fertile corn country, and finally, in a ferry over the Om, entered the city by a neat bridge, at five in the evening.

On my arrival, I of course presented myself to the Izpravnick, or head commissary, and made known my loss in as good language as I could. I failed in making him understand me, but he humanely gave me good lodgings until he could procure the presence of one of the military officers, to act as interpreter. This was done the next day. Meantime, I addressed a letter to the Governor General and Governor of Tobolsk, requesting an attested copy of the documents I had lost, and which I had taken the precaution to have made there. The police-master invited me to dine with him, though he confessed he could not understand either my object or character. He was, however, soon satisfied by the arrival of an express with my passports, &c. all complete. Thus was I, from a state of suspicion and surveillance, again restored to society. I should be very ungrateful, were I not to do justice here to the conduct of the commissary,

who kindly went eighty miles, upon my account, to enforce the return of the papers, which being in a tin case, induced the party to suspect money was there. All that I had was, however, in my knapsack, and that did not amount to five pounds. I dined the second day with the chiefs of the district, when a committee of the merchants attended to request my acceptance of a commercial commission to the Kirgeese and Kalmuck's country, being given to understand I could speak those languages from having formerly traded with them. Here, then, was a captain of the British navy, in the heart of Siberia, converted into a Tartar trader. I humoured the joke, and demanded the per-centage. They made their offer, and my demand exceeding it by from twenty to thirty per cent., I was of course not employed. In the evening, I received a polite invitation from Baron Klotte, the general then commanding the military corps of Siberia. It is proper to observe that the worthy Baron honoured me with this compliment before I had recovered my papers, and solely with the view of benefiting and protecting a stranger. I passed in the garrison three pleasant days, conversing in the French language, which I found both ladies and gentlemen understood well. Feasts and fêtes were given to me by the first individuals, all of whom vied in exemplifying to me the boundless hospitality of their nation.

Omsk is placed at the junction of the Irtish and Om. Previous to the invention of cannon, it was

no doubt a strong place, and even at present, considering the means of those by whom alone it can be attacked, may be deemed impregnable. It has a garrison of four thousand men, with a flying artillery of forty pieces. It may be divided into fortress, town, and suburbs. The first is the most considerable, and is in fact a neat place, the buildings, barracks, &c. being constructed generally of brick, and surrounded by a good mud wall and ditch, which will ere long have cannon mounted upon it. The military college is a noble foundation upon the Lancasterian system, and was established immediately on his Imperial Majesty's return from his visit to England. Wonderful proficiency has been attained by several of its pupils, now young men, and the general improvement reflects credit on all concerned in its management. The youth are instructed, besides reading, writing and arithmetic, in drawing, mathematics, fortification, and algebra, and in some of the oriental languages. The barracks for the boys, their food, clothing, bedding, &c., are in excellent order; and every praise is due to the attention and benevolence of the commandant, Col. Ivanoff, who is considered by them as a father. They are composed of the children of the military forming the army of Siberia. The school for the children of the cossacks is on a similarly benevolent plan, although not quite so forward from the want of good masters. The town and suburbs have some neat buildings, but

are not otherwise remarkable. The united population is seven thousand five hundred.

Omsk was one of the strong places of the Tartars, and successfully withstood the attacks of the great Yermak. The country round is fertile as to its soil, though not extensively cultivated: it is one vast plane as level as a floor. The fortress is north, and the town south of the Om, but both are east of the Irtish. Opposite is the territory of the wandering Kirgeese, presenting no appearance of cultivation or dwellings. A considerable trade is carried on with them, as also with the Calmucks to the south, which consists in the barter of cattle, &c. for tobacco and spirits. Several children of each of these tribes are to be seen in Omsk, who are slaves, having been sold by their parents for a pound of tobacco, or a glass of spirits. They are, however, in this degraded condition, better off than when wandering the inhospitable desarts.

The Kirgeese are divided into three hordes, all more or less tributary to Russia, although they have Khans of their own. They are all wanderers over the countries between Omsk and the Caspian sea. Their occupations consist in hunting, fishing, and breeding cattle, and of the latter they have immense droves in this vicinity. They are not considered nice in the mode of acquiring them, and have even been accused of kidnapping and selling christians: an accusation not improbable from the example set them. They continue only so long in

a place as there is forage for their beasts, getting, in winter, as near the woods as possible, for the advantage of fuel, though, in most parts, the dried dung of their cattle provides a ready and efficient substitute. I saw one of their chiefs, a good looking fellow, but very filthy; and indeed, they are in general the most miserable and filthy race I ever beheld, scarcely, during the warm weather, affording themselves a pair of trowsers for mere decency. One large iron kettle, with wooden spoons, constitutes the furniture of their more wretched tent. They are, however, excellent horsemen, and are supposed to be descended from the Mongoles and Tartars. Their language is peculiar to themselves.

The Calmucks who, like them, make no scruple to dispose of their children upon any momentary distress, or want of spirits, are yet a different race, both with respect to features and origin. They are, however, their equals in idleness and filth, and follow the same vagabond way of life. The Calmucks are, notwithstanding, the direct descendants of the Mongoles, who emigrated hither after the destruction of their empire. Very few are subject to Russia, a great part of them living in Chinese Mongolia, while the rest of them, under the protection of Russia, roam about the countries situate between the Don and Volga, and the Ural mountains. Their features will for ever mark them in whatever part of the world—the flat face, small and elongated eyes, broad nose, high cheek bones, thick lips, and

brownish yellow complexion, are sure signs of their Mongolian descent. They are obliging, but inquisitive and dishonest; yet, with a little Russian education and discipline, they make good servants. I ate and drank with them, as also with the Kirgeese, upon roasted meat, without bread, or any thing else, save a glass of spirits and a pipe of tobacco.

Thus much of the two people whom I shall meet upon my next journey along the Irtish. I departed with a military cossack, and a protection from Baron Klotte, addressed to all the general, field, and subaltern officers of the army of Siberia, accompanied with a discretionary power to call out horses. I reached the second station, twenty miles, and halted for the night: the third station, Achinskaye, is a large village, with a ditch and redoubt, for defence against bows and arrows. The neighbourhood of the fourth station abounds in horses, bullocks, sheep and camels. I reached the twelfth, one hundred and fifty miles from Omsk, without any thing of interest. It is called Jeliezinskaya fortress, having a commandant, and garrison of two hundred and fifty men, and twelve pieces of flying artillery, to defend it. It is a neat little town, surrounded by a mud wall and ditch, with a ponderous gateway, which gives it a martial appearance; nor is the situation void of interest, although placed upon a desolate tract,

Where wilds immeasurably spread,
Seem lengthening as I go.

The distant parts of the Kirgeese lands, boast some eminences, and a considerable quantity of wood; the road is good, and living cheap, fish particularly being very abundant. The road still lies along the right bank of the Irtish, and the several villages are purely military, to keep up the communication between the frontier fortresses and Omsk; a non-commissioned officer and twelve or twenty men residing in each. Their dwellings are good, and excellent vegetables are produced in the gardens; a great advantage over the fort of Omsk, where the soldiers have either too much work, or are too idle to attend to the production of vegetables, notwithstanding they are greatly needed as an anti-scorbutic, great ravages being made by that disorder among the soldiers, who at present subsist entirely on dried meat, bread, and brandy.

I dined with the commandant, a German, and resumed my journey amongst a number of Kirgeese tents, and immense herds of cattle. One of these wanderers I induced to sing; but, though the air was musical enough, its words, as I understood, and the accompanying actions, as I could perceive, were much too obscene. At the fourth station, I was favoured with a drive by a young lass of seventeen; and, if she manages her husband as well as she did the horses and the whip, I should scarcely

envy him his fortune, though indeed she was a personable girl, and had secured my gratitude by officiating as postilion. The fifth station is marked by much corn-land.—I dined with two of the Kirgeese chiefs, who had come to take account of their property. Their appearance was handsome and manly: a long robe of blue cloth beautifully embroidered and fastened round the waist by a highly polished silver belt, from which was suspended a dagger, a knife, a pipe, and what in England might be termed a tinder-box; a shirt of coloured cotton, large Tartar trowsers, and boots to correspond; a handsome fur cap, with a small black one under it to cover the clean shaved head; a long beard, and bare neck. Their horses were well accoutred, and managed by a long whip, which serves also in the driving of the cattle. They were altogether superior looking young men of about twenty-five.

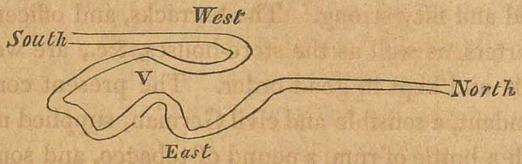
At the eighth station the eye is somewhat relieved from the sameness of the scene, a good deal of wood and pasture land, with many of the Kirgeese yourtes and fires appearing on the opposite side of the river: an abundance of corn upon this. At the twelfth station several islands in the river, and many fishing boats, are added to the scene. The youth of both sexes are extremely beautiful, and present the liveliest picture of health: both go unclothed till the age of twelve, with the exception

only of a clean white shirt, fastened tight round under the breast.

I reached Yamhishersk, one hundred and sixty miles from the last fortress, which it greatly resembles, although its garrison is larger, being seven hundred and fifty strong. The barracks, and officers' quarters, as well as the store-houses, &c., are well built and kept in good order. The present commandant, a sensible and civil German, supplied me with a bottle of rum, a pound of tobacco, and some bread. I met here also a young Prussian, who was a resident of Moscow when that city was burnt by the French. From that disaster a ruined man, he entered the army, and now presented himself to me as interpreter of various languages, though of the six he professed, I believe he understood no other than Russ. His goodnature, however, and general obligingness to me, made him an acceptable companion.

To the next fortress is a distance of one hundred and eighty miles, which I commenced next morning, alternately walking and riding as circumstances offered. At fifty miles there are many long, but not very high hills, and the country is sufficiently picturesque to employ the genius of a painter. The distant horizon to the North shewed the Irtish flowing in a direct course. Nearer hand it meanders beautifully, serpentining through the pasture grounds, to which some natural hedges gave the

most interesting appearance. A solitary Kirgeese village of moveable tents stood in the centre, the river winding almost round it, and forming somewhat of a peninsula as in the annexed cut,



the V being the site of the dwellings. Vast herds of cattle were grazing beyond the village; the sun was setting as it were in clouds of fire; while the moon standing in the south added a peculiar feature to the silence and solitude of the scene.

To the tenth station I trudged over bad roads, in worse weather, and through a dreary and unproductive country. On reaching the thirteenth station, however, high lands to the south began to revive me with their appearance, and break the sameness of the scene.

I stopped at Gloukhof a little unwell, from having been wet twenty-four hours; a small cabin received me, whose civil landlord and his handsome daughter readily furnished me with bread, rice, and milk, and a comfortable bed. Next day started for Semipalatinsk, which I reached at noon, having crossed some sand hills.

Semipalatinsk is also a fortress with near one thousand soldiers and a commandant. It is a neat town,

and has a military school upon the Lancasterian system, instructing four hundred boys; a circumstance of pleasing reflection to an English mind, to find her own benevolent ideas adopted even here, in a tract of country removed by its situation from almost every access to civilization. The establishment is in its infancy, and from this and a great want of capable masters, exhibits no great proficiency beyond reading and writing. The town, independent of the military, numbers about two thousand inhabitants, who carry on an inconsiderable trade with their southern neighbours. It stands on a pleasant eminence, commanding a fine view of the lofty mountains to the south. I was hospitably entertained by the commandant, who lives in a respectable style. The surrounding country is void of cultivation, and infested with robbers, who commit serious depredations, an instance of which occurred while I was at dinner; a poor pedlar being robbed of two thousand roubles, or one hundred pounds, and his horse, neither of which there is any chance of his recovering. There is evidently something incorrect, but which I could not fathom, in the administration of justice as it respects the punishment of robbers, but there is no doubt, that a due percentage on the lost property, applied in a certain manner, will procure its restoration. This, indeed, appears as open a countenance of the crime as can well be imagined; yet such is the fact. If no fee is given, litle exertion is made, and the nu-

merous complaints on this subject have hitherto been of no effect.

I quitted Semipalatinsk late in the evening, and directed my steps for Ubinsk along the banks of a little stream which gives name to the fortress, and which unites with the Irtish. I had entered a a kibitka which was passing the same way, and at some distance observed the postillion turn off suddenly to the right. My mind misgave me, because in no instance before had I deviated from the high road. I recollected also, that the Cossack and postillion were both half drunk, and had been in earnest and secret conversation; I therefore determined to quit by a short movement. It was ten at night, and we were in a low thick brush-wood, when taking my knapsack, I suddenly quitted the vehicle, informing them, as well I could by signs, and an obstinate persistance not to go their way, that if they were bound as they had pretended, they would follow me. I continued alone, and regained the main road; the vehicle also tacked and came after me, but I refused to re-enter it, and marched on to the next station, keeping them at a respectful distance all the way. On my arrival, I discharged the Cossack, without, however, reporting his conduct to the German commandant, as I perhaps ought to have done. My hostess for the night was in a most unamiable temper, seeming to partake of the disappointment of the two fellows;

for which her husband, a corporal, gave her a sound drubbing, with a stick "bigger than his thumb."

In the afternoon of the next day, I crossed the Irtish, after a hard walk of thirty miles. The country low and wet from smart showers,—in the evening I reached Poyanoyarsk, and here first saw melons in this country. These, which are of a prodigious size, form, with cucumbers and bread, the general summer diet of the inhabitants. They sell at one copec each, that is ten for a penny,—a price which certainly does not render to the grower any thing beyond the barest subistence; for five guineas I might have loaded a ship with them. I received a great many as presents, but left them as useless to one in my situation. The cucumbers are also very fine, and equally cheap, being one hundred for a penny; and good wholesome brown bread at five pence for forty pounds. Whether from perfect hospitality or abundance I know not, but I certainly never was better entertained.

Next day I reached Ubinsk, a vile dirty place, called here a town. I had before passed some distant elevated lands on the Kirgeese side, and here, I think, may be said to commence that chain of lofty mountains which divides the empires of Russia and China. Having procured another Cossack, I continued along the Irtish for Ustkamenogoesk, the country on the west presenting some fine hill and dale, with mountainous breaks in the

back ground, while the Russian side is still a level steppe. Corn fields lie at intervals along the road to the river Uba, which unites with the Irtish opposite to a bluff projecting point, and hence occasions a strong cross current and rapid. It was late when I reached it, yet being anxious to get on, I determined to cross the stream, against the remonstrances of the natives. The ferry, or horse-boat, being out of repair, I was advised to wait at the village; but seeing a canoe, I determined on trying how far it would assist me. My knapsack and various parts of saddlery, I skulled over in safety, with my Cossack, the inhabitants sending their horses at the same time, and actually tying two to the canoe, which had nearly proved fatal to the whole. I, however, reached in safety, and a traveller on the opposite bank gave me the use of his télega to proceed upon my journey, not being himself able to take it across the river.

The night was dull and rainy, but the moon being near her full, we got on tolerably well, and at eight in the morning I reached Uvarova, whence I again began to enjoy my travels; for that unproductive and almost endless flat which extends from Ubinsk to Tobolsk and the Frozen Sea, and from the Ural chain far eastward of Tomsk, is now succeeded by a beautiful variety of hilly country, much cultivation, and some forest spots. Many bold and picturesque bluffs run into the river, rushing as it were through the valleys, and forming strong ed-

dies as they pass the islands with which the river is interspersed. I reached Ustkamenogorsk in the early part of the second evening, having crossed a sort of broken chain of hills. The scenery in general was, however, very beautiful and wild; to the right one of the peaks lifts its snow-clad head, and is visible at the distance of one hundred miles. Ustkamenogorsk is placed in a vast level valley, bounded east and west by lofty distant mountains, and the whole forms a rich and striking panorama. The fortress is like others hereabouts,—a bare mud wall, yet keeps a commandant and three hundred soldiers in snug but useless quarters, occupied in cutting hay and plundering the poor peasantry.

Very fine timber is brought here from a distance of twenty miles, but the country is otherwise sterile. I quitted it for Boukhtarma next morning. The first station was over a mountainous road, offering the most abundant treasures to the botanist and mineralogist; thence to Feklistouska twelve miles, and to Severnoy ten, over one of the most romantic countries in the world, sometimes along the banks of the rapid Ulba, then across deep and dangerous ravines, tremendous precipices, and fertile vallies, where a few Tartar peasants tending their flocks and herds were the only signs of any thing beside the immediate works of the Creator. Some slender birch and green fir-trees arrest the attention on the almost trackless path. The scene was too fine to sleep in, and I continued to Alexan-

drofskoy, twelve miles farther, to witness a repetition of the magnificence I had left behind. It was indeed a scene to be enjoyed—at the close of the evening, in the middle of the month of August, and both the great luminaries of heaven were just seen peeping above the distant hills, one rising from the east t'other setting in the west, and not a sound was to be heard save the murmur of the Ulba winding towards the east. The night was cold but beautiful, and a heavy dew falling on the most elevated parts, seemed to cast a melancholy shade over the vallies below. All nature seemed to smile upon me as I trotted over the ground, meditating upon the perfect beauty of so deserted and unfrequented a spot. My reverie continued till midnight, when I reached the village. Thence on horseback to Boukhtarma, fifteen miles, arriving early in the morning. The way was still exceedingly beautiful, being over a mountainous tract, now on the summit and then in a close valley, every where overhung by birch-trees. A few corn fields also appeared in the last stage before I reached the fortress.

Boukhtarma stands on the right bank of the Irtish, in one of the most romantic spots in the universe. It is environed by the noblest mountains, which yet appear to have no other connexion with each other than that of standing together on the same globe: they are in fact so many beautiful hills placed on a perfectly level plane, so that a traveller

may go round them without an ascent or descent of ten perpendicular feet. From this may be imagined the romantic beauty of the valleys which intervene: not a tree, nor a shrub, nor a habitation is to be seen, save only in the fortress;—nothing but grass. The valley is one continued carpet of herbage, forming, in contrast with the sterile mountains, a picturesque solitude, undisturbed, except during the night, by the barking of the wolves and other wild animals.

I drank tea with the commandant, and called on the administrator of the customs, to whom I had a commendatory letter. I found him civil, obliging, and tolerably educated,—consequently a rare plant in such a place. I accompanied him to view what is deemed an object of curiosity in this part of the world; it is a large sand-stone near the bank of the river, on which are imprinted the marks of the feet of a man and of a horse; they are in a perfect state, and to all appearance have been formed by nature. The heels are towards the river, the feet of the man in advance of those of the horse about thirty inches, very well representing the situation of the feet of a man holding the horse. I could gather nothing of its origin beyond the silly tradition of the place. It is evident, however, from the situation of this stone, that the river has changed its course.

The fortress, though it maintains a commandant, with a garrison of three hundred men, is a

miserable place, the worst along the whole frontier line; nor is the village better. The Kirgeese commit great havoc among the cattle, stealing great numbers, of which not more than one half are, in any circumstances, restored. A considerable trade might be established at this point between the Russian and Chinese empires, but for the obstinacy, ignorance, and policy of the latter nation, who will not change the route by which their forefathers travelled. The advantage of the alteration would be sufficiently apparent from the mere fact of the lesser distance from Pekin to Boukhtarma, than from that city to Kiatka and Tobolsk. But the main circumstance is, that by adopting Boukhtarminsk as the entrepôt of the national commodities, no less than three thousand miles of land-carriage would be saved, as on both sides the produce might go the whole distance betwixt St. Petersburg and Boukhtarma by sea: the effect to both would evidently be a very considerable saving, principally indeed to the Russians, on which account the Chinese would rather waive their own advantage than consent to the arrangement.

Against this measure it is argued, that the government of Irkutsk would be materially injured. This is by no means clear; and even if true, the benefit of the public should not be put in competition with that of half a dozen rich merchants, who might still maintain a trade to supply all Farther and Central Siberia. The Russian American Company

must be rather benefited than injured by the measure; and in short all the difference to Russia would be, that its European dominions would be supplied with the productions of China at twenty per cent. less than at present. The Russian government appear to have had this project in contemplation, though they have not persevered; a few silks, bricks of tea, and tobacco, being the only articles entered since the erection of a custom-house. No doubt can exist of the advantages arising from so local and beautiful a situation; it would have the effect of making the banks of the Irtish, from its source to Tobolsk, one of the most valuable, fertile, and beautiful districts in the universe. Settlers would come from all parts of the world to establish themselves on its boundless tracts of corn and pasture lands. Switzerland has been called free, but will scarcely bear comparison with a country which has no human inhabitant. Nor is the climate bad, 18° of Reaumur's being the extreme; and winter, which begins in November, ending in April.

Having procured a guide, I left Boukhtarma for the line of demarcation on the Chinese and Russian frontiers. I first crossed the stream which gives name to the fortress, and then over a good path, entered upon a most romantic country, near the village of Voronia. It is impossible, without a poetical imagination, to conceive the beauties of such a country; the magnificent and bold sterile

precipices which are seen rising from the great level pasture base, are, I should think, quite unparalleled; and the noble Irtish forcing its way amongst the numerous islands near this part of the river, adds to the majesty of the scene. At the village, among other similar luxuries, I was treated with wild currants, mellons, cassia, "milk, and honey." Surely this is the natural place for the habitation of man. The banks of the river are indented with numerous well formed artificial caves, used as ice cellars. Fifteen miles farther I reached the picturesque village of Cheremshanka, remarkable as a great breeding place for cattle; thence along the banks of the Irtish, on a good path, over a well cultivated corn country, I passed Krasni-yarki, and at eight in the evening reached Macaria, on the banks of the Narym, a small stream uniting with the Irtish, in an abundant and fertile valley.

The night was so beautiful, the moon just ascending above the hills, that in spite of a good supper, which was ready and inviting my attack, I resumed my journey on horseback, in company with the landlord, to Malaya-Narymka, the last Russian spot on the frontier. An officer and a few men placed here, are all that are left to mark the boundaries of two such mighty empires as Russia and China. I forded the little stream which forms the actual limit, and seating myself on a stone on the left bank, was soon lost in a reverie. It was about midnight; the moon, apparently full, was near her meridian, and

seemed to encourage a pensive inclination. What can surpass that scene I know not. Some of the loftiest granite mountains spreading in various directions, enclosing some of the most luxuriant valleys in the world; yet all deserted!—all this fair and fertile tract abandoned to wild beasts, merely to constitute a neutral territory!

To the first Chinese settlement it is eighty miles, I would fain have visited it, but durst not without previous notice, and for this ceremony could ill spare the time. Formerly their advanced post was where I am writing this account, and I felt something like pleasure to find myself within the celestial empire. Their guard was it seems removed by the Court of Pekin, from jealousy of her subjects holding any converse with foreigners. The commanding officer is a banished mandarin, who is compelled to live like the soldiers, being denied both money and assistance from his friends; but as the post is generally occupied by a person who has been condemned to death for some great crime, he is fain to accept his pardon on condition of serving ten years as chief of the guard. They have, I was informed, a neat village, with abundance of meat and vegetables, besides wild fruits.

At peep of dawn I recrossed the Narym, and getting a canoe floated down to my deserted supper at Makaria, which the hostess had been desired by my companion to keep hot. I reached it at four in the morning, having been carried along by the

stream with dangerous velocity. After some refreshment, I again entered the canoe, receiving a brick of tea, and a pound of tobacco from my obliging host. He is a voluntary settler, with twenty men under his command, who are all accumulating property. The velocity of the Irtish soon carried me past Krasni-yarki, and I reached Boukhtarma at three in the morning of the following day, if possible still more delighted with the prospect; the ever changing variety of the banks is as rich as the beauty of the inland scenery. The left banks are generally bold and lofty precipices crowned with wood, while the right is a low, but beautiful plain, studded with rocky hills, and abounding in corn and hay.

The recrossing of the Boukhtarma was certainly a hazardous adventure. The passage is never attempted but in the day time, as there are many shifting sand banks, and a tremendous cross current or rapid to avoid. This is occasioned by four currents meeting at the same point of the Irtish, near to the fortress; and so rapid is the collected stream that nothing but poling the canoe can cross it, and if once the boat be brought within the vortex of the centre, nothing can save it from being swamped.

It was with great difficulty that I prevailed on any of the Cossacks, who, at the best, are but indifferent boatmen, to take me across. After great toil and risk we reached in safety:—the fault was clear-

ly mine had any accident occurred, but I was too impatient at the moment, either to weigh the matter or to listen to remonstrance.

Arriving early, I roused up my old friend the collector of the customs, with whom I breakfasted and dined. The place is considered unhealthy, owing to the foulness of the water of the Boukhtarma; a mischief one would think easily remedied by the proximity of the Irtish, which is only two miles distant; but here Russian indolence supersedes most conveniences. I was informed that reindeer abound in the mountains, which also contain some sheep. The horns of the former are considered valuable, fetching two and three guineas a pair: when very young, the Chinese purchase them and extract a favourite medicine; the younger the animal who has shed the horns, the greater the value. All sorts of diet were too cheap to be named, enough to hold out reasonable inducements to emigrate thither.

After dinner I embarked for Ustkamenogorsk, upon the Boukhtarma, descending which I rapidly entered the Irtish, a noble river. The crew of the boat offered up thanks for their safe arrival: we had come through a close and mountainous bluff valley, and certainly there was something terrific in the passage. I need not observe that I was myself thankful, as really the mixing with military sailors was far from pleasant. At midnight when we had reached fifty miles, several fishing boats joined

company; we left them, however, with courier haste, and I reached the fortress at six in the morning, having been about ten hours descending a distance of ninety miles. The scenery from Narym to Boukhtarma and Ustkamenogorsk, a distance of one hundred and sixty miles, is upon the whole truly beautiful, though not a habitation is to be seen along the banks, which are lofty eminences, divided by tremendous and perpendicular ravines; there are, however, many delightful and romantic situations, but no means of holding a communication along the banks of the river, except by boats. Wild fowl and fish are in the utmost abundance, as observed before when speaking of Tobolsk.

Of the value of the Irtish, I need say nothing, it speaks for itself. Holding an almost uninterrupted communication from the frontiers of China, to the frozen sea, a steam boat might go from Boukhtarma to Tobolsk in a few days, and return in twice the time. Wood for fire is plentiful, and many establishments might be formed for the preparing and felling of it; while a water communication is ready formed with the Caspian, Baltic, and White Seas, and thence down even to Tobolsk. The soil which is a black mould, is exceedingly rich. It is to Boukhtarma that colonies of Scotch should be sent, and indeed such was the intention of the Emperor Paul, but it was set aside upon the breaking out of a war, and has not since been resumed,

though there is no doubt that, at this moment, such settlers would be both protected and encouraged.

At Ustkamenogorsk I again partook of the hospitality of the commandant, a Frenchman: his name is Delancourt, and he has been thirty-five years in Siberia, doing any thing or nothing; being one of those feeble but respectable individuals, of which there are several, that are supported by the liberality of the Russian government. In him I saw the first instance of a Frenchman's forgetting his own country; he seemed entirely divested of the patriotic affection, which that fickle nation are supposed to possess, but which perhaps generally exists more in appearance than in reality, as wherever a Frenchman can do best, there he will settle.

I asked him if he ever intended to return to France, his reply was, that "France was nothing to him." I asked him, why? he looked at his wife and large family of marriageable daughters, shrugged up his shoulders, and said, "Que voulez vous que j'y fasse," and heaving a sigh, left the room. Yet, in spite of his teeth, he was still a Frenchman, for the first words upon his return were, "Ma pauvre France." I had touched a tender string, and although he is now resigned to his fate, he says that he has been a "bête" for marrying, and begetting an entail which he cannot quit. His society, during the few hours that I enjoyed it, was very agreeable.

In the early part of the evening I again embarked on the Irtish for Ubinsk, the distance being eighty miles,—yet I arrived there early in the morning. The view of the country is various, the prospect more pleasant and open than higher up, and some prettily scattered hills on the plain, which attended me for thirty miles, when the banks of the river became low and flat, and except some hills, very distant to the west, every thing reminded me that I had again entered upon the steppe desert. I enjoyed an hospitable and wholesome breakfast, even at such a dirty place as Ubinsk; indeed it presented nothing of interest but the good and modest looks of its female inhabitants. I procured a Cossack to attend me to Barnaoúle, distance two hundred and twenty miles; the first station towards which was to Chamanai, twenty five miles, over corn fields, and along the right bank of the Ulba, which I was now more fortunate in crossing than before, the large ferry boat having been repaired. Passed a large silver mining village called Michailofsky;—the country becoming hilly and barren, except on the banks of the river. One occurrence in this district powerfully recalled me to Europe, for I dined at a public house, and was expected to pay for my dinner, the first time since my arrival in Siberia. But the place is so great a thoroughfare, that it is here a considerable business to prepare provisions for the thousands of carters

who are employed in transporting the ore to Kolyvan and Zmeyeva.

To the next station is a good road of twenty miles over a well cultivated country. On the second day I reached Zmeyeva, twenty miles farther, through heavy rains and over a hilly country. It is an uncivil and inhospitable place. I arrived at near ten o'clock, exceedingly wet and fatigued, and presenting myself to the police master, was sent to three lodgings, all of which refused me from my distressed appearance. I again returned to the police, and seating myself down on the door-steps, raining as it was, made my supper of melons and bread, with a glass of spirit from the kabak: in this condition I was found by the police master, who had heard of my being refused entrance. He accompanied me to the master of the house, whom he reprimanded, and actually turned the owners out of the best room to make accommodation for me. I felt averse to such a conduct, yet knowing the custom of the country, and feeling what a night it was; I would not interfere, and therefore, after partaking of tea, which in this country is soon provided, lay down with my Cossack,—a mere useless fellow.

Next morning I found the master and mistress of the house as civil as they had been the reverse, providing me with all I wanted, and even begging me not to be angry at their unintentional error.

Zmeyeva is a large, but scattered place, next in rank to Barnaoule, in the Government of Kolyvan. It numbers from five to six thousand inhabitants, all in thriving circumstances. It has many valuable silver and copper mines in its neighbourhood, and a considerable government establishment is kept up for their use, and for reducing the ore to silver, which is said to be found here purer than in any other part of the government; but I did not wait to view the works, being anxious to reach Barnaoule. Arrived at Saukas, I discharged the Cossack as a saucy and useless fellow, who had flattered himself I could not do without him. In general they are more plague than profit: though I am willing to make allowance for the unpleasantness of travelling with a capricious stranger, and this too in rainy weather, and over bad roads, without being permitted to ride but at his pleasure. In the evening I reached the river Kolyvan, beyond which is a romantic looking country, inhabited by a wild Rashkolnick race, who seemed inclined to try how long I could travel without food. They are descendants of a people banished by the empress Catherine from Poland, about the time of the second dismemberment in 1789. I was however fortunate in getting a lodging at the abode of an old soldier who had lost both his legs, although the rest of the society consisted of fifteen ironed convicts, bound to the mines of Nertchinsk as deserters from the mines of Kolyvan. I was too

glad to get any where from the inclemency of the weather, and Rashcolnicks, to feel much care about my present company.

I reached the fifth station over a flat pasture plain, passing and meeting the greatest variety of vehicles which I have ever seen converted to one use, all of which are employed between the mines and Barnaoule in carrying the earth and ores.—The common téléga, canoes, coffins, covered carts, and waggons are alike occupied: the covered carts belong to the government, and are used expressly for conveying the more valuable specimens. I enquired into the condition of the people, but could only learn that he who had most horses and carts was best off. Having crossed the little river Aley, I was hospitably entertained at the sixth station by the elder of the village, whose mother is a German; we contrived to be intelligible to one another, and he was so good as to send me with his horses the next morning to the eighth station, near forty miles of abominable and slippery roads. I got to the river Katounya, at the ninth station, and crossing by a decent wooden bridge, entered a fine open country, the Obe flowing majestically in the fore ground. Cultivation was conspicuous in every direction; and immense forests bound the distant horizon. At Kalmanka I was almost knocked up and tortured with an insufferable head-ache, my very eyes seemed a plague to me; I was, in short, so ill as to refuse all nourishment. Fortune threw

me into the habitation of an old, civil, and humane man, who seeing my condition, kindly put me into his own bed, giving me also some warm tea, and a couple of fox blankets. I slept well, and arose next morn in every respect, except weakness, as if nothing had ailed me.

With my knapsack on my shoulders I again bade adieu to my host, and reached Barnaoule in the afternoon, eighteen miles: the neighbouring country one vast pasture, enlivened by some fine wood, and villages enclosed within cultivated lands. Upon nearing the city the soil becomes changed from a black mould to heavy sand, and the face of the country is converted to a thick forest of pine and fir. Descending the hill to the south-west of the city, it has a neat and remarkably regular appearance, being situated on the Obe, just at the point where the little river Barnaoule enters it. I waited upon the police master, procured comfortable lodgings, passed the night well, and then paid my respects to his Excellency, the Governor (Froloff), who, with his amiable lady, shewed me every attention during my stay, and insisted upon my making their house my home.

The Governor was good enough to accompany me to the different public works, all of which I found in the best state, and was highly gratified at the inspection. Indeed the order and proper feeling of the government of Barnaoule might be made a proverb; the work in the mines, and all the de-

partments, being carried on day and night. The silver metal is wrought into ingots, and in that state forwarded to St. Petersburg; but the copper ore is coined to pay the salaries of the officers and workmen. The money of Barnaoule is far superior in workmanship to that of Ekatherinebourg. There are thirty-two mines belonging to the Emperor, and more are continually discovered, so that the whole district may be said to be silver. They yield, upon an average, twelve hundred poods of metal, which, in consideration of some gold mixed with it, is equal to four millions and a half of roubles, or two hundred thousand pounds, no trifling return to Russia from so small a province. The expenses of the establishment, including the maintenance of the officers, &c. is about one million and a half of roubles; which is nearly defrayed by the taxes, duties, and tributes paid by the Kalmucks and Kirgeese from the southward. The establishment, therefore, certainly produces a clear revenue of four millions.

Of eighty-two thousand inhabitants which the government contains, independent of thirteen thousand belonging entirely to the works, fifty-five thousand, or two-thirds are obliged to be constantly at work, that is, during twelve hours out of the twenty-four; the first week during the night, and the second during the day, and so on. The third week is a period allotted for the working of their lands, and this they owe to the goodness and humanity of the present chief, who has in many

respects ameliorated the condition of the unfortunates under him, and who, it will be recollected, are, like those at Ekatherinebourg, not criminals, but peasants belonging to the emperor.

The wages and profits derived from this very hard work, carried on day and night, is almost too trifling to name; but a little reflection will shew that their condition is far from wretched. Their direct profits depend upon their actual labour, as he who has most horses, or carries most loads from the mines to Barnaoule, receives most money. They have also ample time to work their lands, and reap abundance of corn and vegetables. Scarcely any full grown man can be found who has not two or three horses, and as many horned cattle, employed during the season in carrying the ore, for which they receive at the rate of thirteen copecks the pood,—one penny farthing for thirty-six pounds. Many of them prefer this employment, and are actually able to save considerable sums of money in it, especially those who have many horses. The plan is this:—

The journey from Zmeyeva to Barnaoule occupies nine days, and allowing the same time for rest and returning, eighteen days are consumed in lodging twenty poods of earth, which is the average of each horse; and as each pood pays thirteen and a half copecks, he receives two hundred and sixty-five copecks, or about two shillings,—a sum here sufficient to maintain one person in bread and

meat for thirty days, at the rate of one pound and a half of meat and three pounds of bread a-day. This calculation is on the supposition that each driver manages but one cart, when in fact they sometimes have the charge of ten and fifteen, the profits of ONE HALF of which are equal to a rouble a-day,—a sum sufficient to maintain at least ten people in bread and meat,—to say nothing of their other means in the produce of two days' extra work in each week. But this is not all: many of the carters, who do the work of others, receive one hundred and fifty roubles a-year for that service; no question can therefore possibly arise of the flourishing state of the government of Kolyvan.

The quantity of earth brought to the works of Barnaoule in the course of the year, is four millions of poods. Each pood producing one rouble of clear profit, gives the revenue already stated; two per cent. is added for the quantity of gold, and seven for the value of copper, two hundred and fifty thousand roubles of which are coined. The carriage of so immense a quantity of earth is about half a million of roubles, or twenty-five thousand pounds, or one-third of the whole expense of the government of Kolyvan. Twelve thousand horses and oxen are employed, and about fifteen hundred labourers,—an average of eight horses to each.

The quantity of cultivated land is two hundred and fifty thousand English acres, from which one million and a quarter of poods of flour are pro-

duced, belonging entirely to the peasantry. The produce of vegetables is also wonderful, and the immense herds of cattle keep down meat at a very low price. That of provisions was as follows:—white bread, seldom used, sixty copecks, or six-pence, for forty pounds; ordinary bread, that used by all classes, threepence for forty pounds; excellent beef, fifteen pence for forty pounds, or two pounds for three farthings; and vegetables, eggs, milk, butter, &c. for the merest trifle. House rent is very cheap, and society is good. The town is well and regularly built, having many handsome edifices of brick as well as of wood. It is upon the whole a most desirable place for residence. The city contains about eight thousand inhabitants; and although the situation is not particularly beautiful, it has still many advantages, being placed in a noble forest, which serves at once for building and firing. There is a neat promenade in its only square, which is likely to be much frequented. The governor depends solely on the cabinet, to whom, as at Ekatherinebourg and Nertchinsk, the reports are made; not even the Governor-general can interfere. It may be compared in rank with a vice-governorship.

Upon my arrival, I found great preparations making to receive his Excellency Mr. Speranski, the Governor-general, who was making the circuit of the government to inquire into all abuses, being possessed with unlimited powers. His Excellency

arrived in the course of the second day, and was received with the respect due to his rank, integrity, and virtues. Two sumptuous dinners were given by the chief of the district, the gardens were illuminated, balls were assembled, and every one was happy. I of course shone a conspicuous object —indeed I was honoured with the friendship and confidence of both those gentlemen. Of General Speranski I will only say, that I have never seen more true greatness of soul, or goodness of heart. There is in him a certain condescension and affability, and at the same time a certain air of nobility, that strikes all who approach him with awe and respect. Of his personal attentions to me, I shall ever feel proud and grateful. He had at first taken me for a Raskolnick, from my long beard, and longer golden locks: notwithstanding I wore at the same time a long swaddling grey nankeen coat, and a silken sash round my waist, but indeed so great a buck had I become of late, that I hardly knew myself. As to my shoes they were better than new, although seven years had elapsed from the time that Baron Bode had first used them.

To return however to the Governor-general. He told me that there was an expedition on the river Kolyma, fitted out purposely to solve the question regarding the north-east cape of Asia; and his Excellency kindly offered me his permission to proceed with it. Too glad to accept a favour of the kind, I instantly closed with the offer, and determined not

to wait a moment in Irkutsk and Yakutsk, beyond the necessary time, but to proceed immediately to the Frozen Sea, either to share the fortune good or bad of the expedition, or, in case of any impediment from jealousy, to withdraw and follow some other plan. The Governor-general supplied me with various orders and recommendations for whatever places I should visit, as also an open order "To the Judges of towns and provinces, to the Members of the provincial courts of justice and to all Commissaries in the government of all Siberia", recommending "that the bearer, Captain John Cochrane of the British Royal Navy, now travelling through Siberia, should obtain every lawful protection, defence, and hospitality, and that every aid within the power of the towns and provinces should be afforded him, in case he should stand in need of them".

With the above paper and a cossack, I departed from a town which I still think the happiest, the best governed, and neatest in Siberia, for Tomsk. Taking the road towards Gumba through ten miles of sandy and thickly wooded country, along the left bank of the Obe, I crossed that river the next day, on my way to Osokeena. There are in the neighbourhood some silver pits, and some lakes, but no cultivation whatever. I reached the fifth station on the second day, constantly in a thick forest of noble pine, passing many lakes, as well as small rivers, all uniting with the Obe. On arriving at Wasiugan my Cossack gave me a proof of

his utility by getting drunk, and losing his pipe and his cap as well as his senses, in which state therefore I left him to shift for himself.

Upon reaching Bazikofka, the country improves, and the villages are pleasantly distributed. The inhabitants were all shivering with the cold, though wrapped up in furs, while I, in my nankeen, experienced no inconvenience. The view of the country did not change until I reached Prosokova, where some well cultivated hills make their appearance. My Cossack overtook me, and after many professions of contrition, obtained his pardon, —and got drunk immediately upon the strength of it. At Verushina I got sight of the Tom, winding over a well cleared country, but sadly bare of inhabitants. I was again overhauled for contraband goods. From thence to Tomsk are thirty miles, where I arrived early the following morning. In the latter part, the country bore the appearance of a desart; wood had disappeared, and cultivation had ceased, although the road was fine.

I presented myself to the Vice-governor, brother-in-law to Mr. Berg of Perm, and Mr. Rosing of Tobolsk, my former hosts. Here also I got well lodged, after which I called on his Excellency the Governor Illichefsky, with whom, and his amiable family, I passed my time pleasantly. The Governor presented me with fifty roubles, a watch, a pair of spectacles, and some few articles of wearing apparel, making part of the effects of which I

had been robbed near St. Petersburg, thus verifying my observation to the Governor of Novgorod, that the robbers would be found, but not before I had reached the heart of Siberia, where I now was.

Tomsk is a city and capital of a province of the same name, containing five hundred thousand inhabitants, while there are about nine thousand in the city, which, in spite of several churches, and many handsome edifices, public and private, is a most miserable place, yet shewing every hospitality and kindness to travellers and strangers. The society also, is, I am afraid, bad, owing to the bad example from those whose rank and situation should produce other effects on their inferiors. The town is on the right bank of the Tom, near its source, at the foot of a hill which protects it from the north-east and south-east winds. During May and June it is greatly subject to inundation from the river.

Tomsk has a military school with four hundred students, backward enough in their education, as also a provincial college without masters or scholars, though a considerable revenue is attached to it. Indeed, the only praiseworthy object is a very neat public garden, in which is a building for balls, dinners, and the like; and on this day, 30th August, both were to be held in honour of the Emperor's name day. I declined the invitation to this fête from anxiety to get to my ulterior destination. Of the five hundred thousand inhabi-

tants, about eighty thousand pay taxes. The gross revenue is, I believe, three millions of roubles, nearly the whole of which is necessary to support the government, thus yielding little or no return to the Emperor. It appears useless as a government, its best service being to keep the roads in repair, and to mark the half way between Tobolsk and Irkutsk.

While the province of Kolyvan, at present independent, was attached to the government, it made indeed some returns, but that branch being lopped off, the parties in office, high and low, appear to have given up all idea of being of service, and have since done less than nothing.

Except in point of territory, Tomsk does not appear an eligible place as the seat of a government, which it would certainly be preferable to remove to Yakutsk, dividing the intervening space between Tobolsk and Irkutsk, deducting from the latter all beyond Kirenga on the Lena, and from the former, all west of the Irtish and Tobol, and only south to Ishim; creating Ekatherinebourg and Barnaoule into distinct governments, so that the boundaries of the latter should be all the country south of the great road. Yakutsk would then be the most extensive government in point of territory, holding the command even of Kamchatka, instead of Irkutsk, as at present. The duty of a governor of Irkutsk, and that of a vice-governor

are much too great to be united; and no possibility exists of completing any year's accounts within the year.

I witnessed at Tomsk the sale of thirty tolerable sized bullocks for four hundred and eighty roubles, or about eighteen pounds sterling; excepting only at Mexico, I have never seen another such instance of cheapness and plenty. The province, however, does not produce much bread, being too cold and exposed; that commodity may therefore be deemed dear at its present price of a rouble (or ten-pence) for forty pounds. I departed for Irkutsk, in company with a Cossack, and furnished with a discretionary authority to procure horses, as also an open order for every attention to be shewn to me. I passed over a dreary and woodless flat waste, until I reached Kolionskaya, eighty miles. The villages had been numerous, but miserable in the extreme, excepting those inhabited by Tartars. They are Mahomedans, and, like those of Tobolsk and Tara, of the Kazan race. From Kolionskaya, the country appears to rise a little, but the road was most execrable, nay, almost impassable either by man or horse. The wood is now of tolerable size; birch, fir, larch, pine, and poplar; but there is little or no cultivation, and no appearance of industry, the inhabitants being a lazy set of exiled Russians. The care of cattle and the raising a few vegetables, together with the transport of merchandise for the merchants, almost exclusively engage their atten-

tion, when they are not employed in drinking, and the women have quite enough to do to find provisions and clothes.

Such was my route the next day to Krasnoretchinsky, one hundred miles. Almost each village is favoured with a small river, many of them with considerable ones; yet the road has little or no interest, and the villages composed of half-finished huts. From Batoya my journey was rendered unpleasant, through a misunderstanding with my Cossack, who, meeting with an old crony, had requested to stay supper. I consented, being hungry, under the expectation of being asked to partake; but finding myself disappointed, I hurried away. He followed, grumbling, and giving me at intervals a good deal of impertinence,—a thing, I must confess, very rarely tolerated in Russia. Next day I reached Atchinsk, pleasantly situate on the banks of the Tchulym, in a hilly country, with its two costly churches, some good houses, and two thousand five hundred inhabitants. It can yet barely be called a town; it is at least a very miserable one.

I proceeded through it and many villages, till I reached Krasnojarsk, distant eighty miles, over a road, with little exception, almost impassable; that part which lies between Chornaretsk to Malokemtchoutska is so bad, that I know of no better punishment to call the faculties of the director-general of the roads into exertion, than making him ride the

distance of fifty miles every day in a téléga; if that did not recal him to his duty, I think nothing could,—at all events, it would be no sinecure. For my own part, my bones were so shaken, that I preferred walking. The stages are also too long; a fault, however, in the course of remedy, as new villages are springing up at every eight and ten miles.

At Bolchei Kemtchoutska, I met the caravan with teas, silks, and nankeens from the Chinese frontiers bound to Moscow, consisting of some hundreds of carts. The hilly country continues as far as Zeledeyeva, to which place it is a dreary wild; but thence a fine open country begins, the hills to the north-east exhibiting a laborious cultivation even to their summits.

It was five in the evening when I entered Krasnojarsk veiled like a nun—no bad remedy against the effects of the mosquitoes; and although the appearance seemed strange to me, I persisted in following this custom of the natives. The last stage upon approaching this city is richly luxuriant on both sides; with the Yenissey rolling its picturesque course over a soil rich and well cultivated, and the vicinity may boast situations for the dwellings of a prince, peasant, or philosopher,—the little river Katcha winds at the foot of the northwestern hills, and, uniting with the Yenissey, forms an interesting object. The town stands at their junction, on a low flat sandy peninsula, and from

the course which the river is now taking, threatens in time to completely inundate it, the principal church, which formerly stood in the centre of the town, being now actually in the water.

The Emperor Paul had it in contemplation to plant here also a Scotch colony, but the project, like that before mentioned, was set aside. His successor Alexander has attempted in vain, to follow up a plan every way so desirable; first to the individual emigrants, who would enjoy fine lands, with few taxes and a free exercise of their religion; and secondly to the Russian Government, as they would have thereby become possessed of individuals skilled in the process of agriculture in general, who would have furnished the most valuable examples of industry and economy. The town is said to contain three thousand males, but the site is considered unwholesome, owing to the vapours which rise from the Yenissey. The extremes of heat and cold, are from thirty-two degrees of heat, to forty of frost—fevers are prevalent in the town, but in the neighbouring valleys the air is mild and wholesome. These vallies abound in fine timber.

I was hospitably entertained by the police master, who supplied me with bread, rum, tobacco, tea, and sugar, sufficient to last me to Irkutsk. Crossing the Yenissey, which is a quarter of a mile broad, I reached Kanskoy, about one hundred and thirty miles, over a tolerable road and in many parts well cultivated country; the villages are

scattered at every ten and fifteen miles, but there are few dwellings off the great road. At Kliutchy my Cossack exercised his high powers in giving the elder of the village a sound flogging, for his dilatoriness in providing him with a horse; this power is vested in the Cossacks by a custom of long standing, but which calls loudly for redress,—in the end I arranged the matter by giving the old man a glass at the kabak.

At Kanskoy I dined with the commissary, late a schoolmaster, who spoke the French language. He presented me with a considerable curiosity, being part of the jaw bone of a mammoth. I drank tea with the chief of the farmers, a genteel young man, twice a widower, who has a good house and better furniture. Continuing my route, I soon arrived at the frontiers of the province of Irkutsk, which is divided from that of Tomsk by the river Kan, which might with some propriety, be denominated *Styx*, as the convicts who cross it, generally remain for life. Should they desert and be brought back again, their punishment is indeed severe, being liable to all the penalties which by the laws of England might be inflicted upon an outlaw. The peasants are naturally on the look-out for them, and by force of cudgelling, attended with the application of the epithet "varnack," or "base fellow," compel them to return. The term has been said to be used in allusion to Yermak the conqueror, but I shall not attempt to decide the point.

Upon entering the government of Irkutsk, the

weather became cold and windy, or what is here called a Boorea, being, on the authority of the schoolmaster, derived from the Greek word of the same import,—to an explanation of which I was obliged in courtesy to listen, before I could be allowed to move. Having got clear, I continued my route to Ingashe, the largest, neatest, and most regular village I have ever seen. The improvement, upon entering the government of Irkutsk, is indeed wonderful. The attention, regularity, and order, as well as cleanliness, every where to be seen, reflect the highest credit on the police and late Governor of Irkutsk. This gentleman has however been superseded and arrested by the Governor-general Speranski, and is now under trial at St. Petersburg upon very serious charges. I saw many instances of the excellent state of the police even in the villages on the high road; neither dog, nor horse, nor cart, nor any species of manure, being allowed to remain in the streets, scarcely even for a moment. The inhabitants of these villages are mostly exiles for minor offences, and are settled in villages on the high road, and compelled to pay yasack, or the Siberian poll-tax.

As I proceeded, the road improved, and the country appeared more fertile and picturesque; much fine timber is every where to be seen, the ground still continuing on a gentle ascent, and I reached Nishney, viz. Lower Udinsk, receiving every hospitality possible. It is a small but rather a neat town, of three thousand inhabitants, pleasantly situated on the

Uda, at the foot of a considerable range of elevated table lands. A complete forest of fir, birch, pine, larch, poplar, and all such wild productions. Passing through Kingui a Tartar village, I continued my route in rather a melancholy mood,

> For the thoughts we cannot bridle,
> Force their way without the will.

Amid beautiful scenery and much cultivation, a well frequented road, broken with villages at every eight or ten miles, carried me to an imperial village, where there is a celebrated manufactory of cloth: being night I had not an opportunity of visiting it, but the cleanliness and beauty of all the buildings, form a strong presumption in its favour.

Bilbetie is a large village at the conflux of three rivers, where an excellent ferry is established. I reached the last stage to Irkutsk, in high satisfaction with every thing I had seen, so superior to the governments of Tobolsk or Tomsk. The country, however, has been latterly less picturesque, being a sandy soil. On my approach to the capital early in the morning, a thick fog hovering on the Angara precluded the view, till I reached the monastery near the river; coasting which, I suddenly observed over the dense atmosphere, the churches beautifully reflecting the sun's rays from their tin or copper casings. I crossed the ferry, and at eight in the morning, entered the hospitable habitation of the chief of the navy in the city of Irkutsk.

CHAPTER VI.

Irkutsk — Vercholensk—Kirenga — Vittim—Jerbat — The Tongousians—Olekminsk—Bistack — Yakutsk—The Lena —Meeza—Aldan—The Tookoslar—Baralass—The Sartar —The Bouroulak — Tabalak — The Tostak and Dogdoa—Kabbregah, &c. rivers—The Rasoka—The Beekhall and Bludenayah—The Chouboukalah, Galanimah, and Indigiuka —Zashiversk—Broosneekah—Sordak—The Alazea—Middle Kolyma—Malone—Nishney Kolyma.

The commandant of the navy received me in a flattering manner, and I had the offer of several other residences; but he being a single man, with a large government house, I was induced by these circumstances to stick to the profession, and take up my abode with him.

Having made myself as decent as my limited wardrobe would allow, I called on the Vice-Governor, who made great promises, and exceeded them in performance. Upon quitting his Excellency I made some visits, and delivered my letters of recommendation, made inquiries as to my future movements, and then returned to an elegant dinner with my host, who had invited a party of twenty persons to meet me; indeed, the hospitality and attentions which were showered upon me in this stage of my journey were such as I may fairly say, I could have experienced in few, if any parts of

what is called the civilized world, especially when the humbleness both of my appearance and pretensions is considered; even the ladies condescending to visit the abode of my host—a single man—doubtless out of respect to me. The company consisted of the same individuals whom I afterwards met at almost every party, with hardly any variation; namely, the commandant, his lady and sister; the colonels of artillery and infantry, with their wives; Captain Koutigin, a rich merchant, who farms the sale of spirits, and his wife; the head of the Russian American Company, with his wife and two daughters; and a Mr. Hedenstrom and wife, who had travelled on discovery across the Frozen Sea, in 1809—10 and—11. Besides these, the parties were enlivened by the company of doctors, secretaries, and half a dozen young civil officers, being in the highest rank of society. I retired from the first day's fête at an early hour, thankful for the many favours so liberally heaped upon me.

Next morning, in company with Captain Koutigin, I left the Admiralty House, which is two miles from the city, to view whatever is notable in Irkutsk. The number of them is small, and they are widely scattered. Fifteen thousand inhabitants, including three thousand of the military, are said to compose the population. Irkutsk indeed scarcely deserves the name of city, except for its public buildings, which are good; yet,

though I confess it is upon the whole a fine town, I could not but feel disappointment from its total want of original plan, as well as its present want of regularity, which must retard its advancement for a long time to come. Tobolsk is certainly its superior in every thing except its situation, and the singularly fine appearance of a few buildings, public and private. The streets are wide, and run at right angles, but there are in some of them gaps of two and three hundred yards without a building. Yet are there many fine points of view: and when it is considered that Irkutsk has been raised into a government and city only within these forty years, its progress towards improvement must be acknowledged. The houses are for the greater part of wood, though many are of brick, and constructed on a superior style of architecture.

Of the churches there are at least a dozen, which not a little contribute to the splendor of its appearance; and though they boast of but very few relics, I feel certain that their bishop fulfils his functions as creditably as any other man of the profession. His Eminence did me the pleasure to invite me to a public breakfast, given in honour of the Emperor's coronation, which I attended, and was highly satisfied with his conduct in every respect.

With my friend Mr. Hedenstrom I conversed about my plans. He appears to be one of the

ablest men in Siberia, and although rather under a cloud at the present moment, is highly worthy of respect and consideration. He had formerly served as private secretary to count Romanzoff, when that nobleman was chancellor; but either some misunderstanding or some misadventure occasioned his removal by the Imperial Government to another scene of action. He was lately commissary of the most lucrative quarter, as a reward for his perseverance and diligence when employed upon the Icy Sea discoveries. I am not aware that any account of his services have been made known to the public, but I am fully sure they deserve to have been. It is only mentioning a part of them to say, that he has surveyed all the islands bearing the name of New Siberia, as far north as the latitude of 76 and has been longer and farther on the ice than any other traveller. Few men in Siberia have more general talent of any description, and through his kindness I was favoured with a fund of the most interesting and important information.

During the short period of my stay in Irkutsk, I was variously employed, either visiting such places as seemed most worthy of notice, or fixing and arranging these ill assorted recollections. I visited a military school, like the others upon the Lancasterian system, with seven hundred boys; it is doing well, which is more than can be said for the institution belonging to the city; indeed, it is a matter of serious regret that in Russia so little

prospers that is not backed by military influence; where the fault lies it might be difficult to discover on so short an acquaintance. There is a mineralogical cabinet appertaining to the city institution, in which are deposited many magnificent specimens of the Nertchinsk mines.

I visited the prison, which I found in a state that would have commanded the approbation of the humane and philanthropic Howard. It is spacious and well ventilated, and the prisoners are allowed plenty of wholesome provisions. They are only chained when employed out of the prison, either upon public works, or in the removal of any nuisance. In connexion with the prison I may also notice a species of public manufactory, or working bazaar for every sort of trade: the inmates or workmen are in general such as have been exiled for misdemeanours, and are detained for their own and the public benefit; many of them contrive to earn a considerable fortune, and all are secure of the benefit of full employment. The building is of wood, and belongs to the city, who hire out apartments at fixed prices, retaining also a proportion of the gainings, which are appropriated to charitable purposes: their capital is already very considerable, and it is one of those public spirited and well digested schemes which is worthy of imitation in every civilized state, where there are either criminals to punish, or unfortunates to relieve.

The exchange and public bazaars are a fine range of buildings, with a superb saloon in the centre, where public balls and masquerades are held at least as often as once a fortnight during the long winters, besides numerous private balls.

Of society there is but little, but that little is good, mostly German. At a public ball given in honour of the coronation, I counted seventy ladies, yet this was considered as a very small number for Irkutsk, as they sometimes muster on such occasions, from two to three hundred. The truth is, with the exception of the ladies I have before named, most of the fair sex belong to the merchants, who may with propriety be termed Jew pedlars, for they deny themselves and their wives almost every comfort, save that of a public and ostentatious dress, from a spirit of opposition and vindictive feeling towards the military, who also on their side but too generally treat them in the same ungenerous, if not slighting and contemptuous manner that we do the Jews in England. A Jew in England, and a merchant in Russia, except in the capitals or sea-port cities, stand on the same level; and I may venture to say, that with very few exceptions, it is not consistent with etiquette, much less with custom, for a person of rank to dine with a merchant, unless he be mayor or farmer-general, or unless on his Saint's day, when it certainly is common to honor him with an acceptation.

The merchants on the other hand, have as strong

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a feeling against the receiving of the military in private, as the latter can have against recognizing them in public.

It is a serious evil that the sons and daughters of the merchants have received no better education. Many of them can scarcely read or write, yet they are in point of opportunity, on a par with those who move in the same sphere in European Russia, owing to the assistance rendered by the Swedes and French, and other exiles, many of whom possess first rate talents.

These expatriated instructors have tended to improve and civilize Siberia, in a ratio surpassing that of central Russia. But many years must elapse, before that happy union of society so conspicuous in England, can be brought about in this part; before the swaddling cloak, and long beard, will be laid aside with the same avidity with which they are now guarded.

My stay in Irkutsk was but a week, when, being furnished with a fresh Cossack, and with every assistance I desired to enable me to reach the river Lena, I set out, a little melancholy at parting with so kind friends; at seven miles I had a last view of the city. The country became very elevated, and the road lay over hill and dale as far as the fifth station. With the exception of some little corn, the land is one uninterrupted pasture. The inhabitants, Russians, are pretty numerous, and their villages, though small, occur at frequent in-

tervals. The post-houses are good and convenient halting places.

Having crossed the river Lena, I soon reached Verсholensk, a large and populous town on the right bank, and one hundred and fifty miles from Irkutsk. The road is by a dangerous precipice, which is descended by horses at a prodigious rate; and on the ascent both drivers and traveller must dismount and put their shoulders to the wheel: yet accidents are of rare occurrence. The opposite bank of the river is highly cultivated and picturesque. The communication by land ceases here, a circumstance at which I was not a little rejoiced, longing to be again upon my own element. I soon procured a canoe and a couple of hands, who, with the Cossack and myself paddled down the stream for eighty miles, to the village of Ustillga. The banks of the river are lofty and well wooded, and present some agreeable scenery. Numerous villages with their rye fields are scattered among the valleys, each invariably attended by its own little stream.

Proceeding day and night in my open canoe, I soon reached Kirenga. The weather was cold, the scenery, though ever changing, was always mountainous, numerous islands were scattered about the river, whose stream ran at about one and a half or two knots per hour; I generally made one hundred to one hundred and twenty miles during each day's progress, and, wherever I went, fared well from the hospitality of the Russian colonists, as well

as from that of my friends at Irkutsk who had provided me according to the Russian proverb, with plenty of *bread and salt.* This simple sounding provision included also some fine partridges, a hare, a large piece of roast beef, and a quantity of meat pies; not omitting wine and rum. A traveller in Russia, whether native, or foreigner, on taking leave of his friends previous to his departure, uniformly finds at his lodgings all the provisions requisite for his journey, with another lodging pointed out at some friend's, for as long as he pleases. Indeed I have no doubt, as the sequel will justify the assertion, that a man may travel through the Russian empire, as long as his conduct is becoming, without wanting any thing—not even horses and money, excepting only the *civilized* parts between the capitals.

The villages leading to Kirensk, are from fifteen to eighteen miles apart. It has the name of a city, containing near one hundred dwellings, and five hundred inhabitants, with three churches and a monastery,—the situation is pleasant, but not otherwise noticeable. I staid in it only a few hours, to enjoy the hospitality of the town major, who felt inclined to try the effect of rye brandy upon me. From it I had gained about five or six miles towards the first Tongousian village when the canoe filled, and we were obliged to pursue the journey by land, creeping round the bluffs, which jet out into them.

Over these poor Tongousians the Cossack exercised his authority in such a manner, that I really felt

as much pain as if the same chastisement had been inflicted upon me. The spirit of despotism which characterizes the Cossacks is infamous. It is infinitely greater, and infinitely more dreaded by the poor aborigines, than the power of the Governor-general. On the eighth day I reached Vittim, which is half-way to Yakutsk. The banks of the river are, within the last twenty-five years, increased in population in the proportion of from three to five, according to a comparison with Mr. Sauer's journal, which I had with me. Prodigious forests of wood are on each side of the river, consisting of pine, fir, larch, alder, and poplar; but from Kirensk all cultivation had ceased, except that of vegetables, and they are but scantily raised; cattle are, however, very plentiful, and of a fine sort, bread is of the same price as at Irkutsk, namely, forty pounds for two shillings. This is owing to the consideration of government in forwarding flour at their expense for the benefit and maintenance of the poor.

At Vittim I was first overtaken by the Ice floating down the river, yet not so as to incommode me; and I had enjoyed the luxury of fine autumnal, though cold weather. From Vittim to Djerbinsky or Jerbat are three hundred miles, which I reached in four days. The stages are very long, and ought to be reduced, being a very heavy pull when going against the stream; but indeed there is nothing that these hardy people will not do without murmuring. Sometimes the boat was so much entang-

led in the ice, that the poor fellows were compelled to strip and track her, up to their waists in water, while the atmosphere was at 5° of cold; I could perceive that they suffered a good deal in consequence, for upon their return to the boat, they could not tell which part of their body to restore first to proper animation. Their great resort, I invariably found, was to a mouthful of smoke from their pipe, —not, however, of tobacco; the greater part at least, being birch-wood dust, or fine shavings, mixed with a very scanty portion of tobacco, the latter article being extremely dear: if to this luxury can be added however small a drop of brandy, they will cheerfully, and even thankfully, undergo the repetition of the suffering.

At Jerbat there is a cave on the left bank of the river, much venerated by the Yakuti. I ascended with great difficulty the rugged steep leading to it. The roof certainly presented a beautiful appearance, being illuminated by what may figuratively be termed chandeliers; formed, no doubt, by the water, which making its way through the apertures above, there freezes, and hangs in icicles from the top of the roof. The scene is very brilliant, but the effect is marred by a projecting crag of rock which overhangs the mouth of the cave, and prevents the eye from taking any other than a horizontal view of it. The air emitted from it was the chilliest I had ever felt. At Jerbat is the line which divides the Tongousian villages from those of the Yakuti.

The Tongousians inhabit divers parts of Siberia, equally distant and distinct; from the shores of the Yenissei, Lena, and Amoor, to those of the Ochota and Omekon, and the mountains about Idgiga. They are all wanderers, and rarely to be seen in any mechanical or subservient employment. They are classed into Forest and Desart Tongousi. The former occupy themselves in fishing and the chace, having but few rein-deer; the latter subsist entirely by the breeding of those animals, and wander from pasture to pasture with their flocks, tents, &c. A very few of them have received baptism; the rest are idolaters. Their language is said to be Manshur, from whom they all, no doubt, descended, as may be inferred by the peculiarity of their eyes, being elongated and far apart. They are characteristically honest and friendly, robbery being considered by them as unpardonable. I was myself a witness of their hospitality or improvidence, for they seem to have no thought of the future, and therefore readily share what they have killed; yet it is strange that nothing will induce them to kill a rein-deer for their own consumption, unless the party is rich, till they have been eight days without food; the act is then considered justifiable. They bear fatigue, cold, and privations, to an extraordinary degree. They are sensible of, and thankful for, kind treatment, but will permit no one to abuse them. To strike a Tongousian is indeed, a great crime, and often leads to fatal consequences, as, in that case, they do not

consider their word as sacred, but justifiably to be broken. They are exceedingly irascible, and can be done nothing with but by good words; and this I had frequent occasions of proving, through generally my own fault.

Their persons are small and rather delicate in appearance, their features regular and somewhat pleasing. With these fair traits of character they are filthy to an extreme, eating and drinking any thing, however loathsome, and the effluvia of their persons is putridity itself. They are considered good soldiers, and are excellent marksmen either with bow or rifle. The dress of either sex is nearly the same as that of the other Tartar nations, differing chiefly in their mode of ornamenting it, and consists of trowsers of the rein-deer skin, with the hair inside, and stockings and boots of the same animal; the latter made from the legs. A waistcoat or jacket also of leather, sometimes lined with white foxes' or with hare skins, supplies the place of a thick sort of short surtout-coat of double leather without the hair; and lastly, a single or double frock with hair in and outside, the two leather sides being together. A warm cap and large gloves, with sometimes a guard for the breast of white fox, called nagroodnick, viz. breast-cover, and a comforter round the neck formed of the tails of the squirrel: such is their costume, which is almost wholly furnished from the skins of rein-deer. Foxes skins serve for caps and linings, and a wolf's is considered

valuable, as the warmest of all outside garments. They have also a guard for the forehead, ears, nose and chin. Their beds are made of a bear's skin or of the large rein-deer, with a blanket from the same animal, lined with the warmest fur, and in shape like a bag, as the feet are completely enclosed; an axe, a knife, wooden spoon, and kettle constitute their only utensils; the first is a *sine quâ non*, and a pipe of tobacco with a glass of spirits, their highest luxury. Their modes of dress, and general mode of living, &c. they have in common, more or less, with all other Siberian nations, whether the Tchukschi, Yukagires, Koriaks, Yakuti or Kamtchadales. There is no other difference amongst them than in the embroidery of their clothes, or the richness or poverty of the wearers; and these I shall take occasion to notice in treating of a different tribe.

Having parted with the Tongousians, for a long time, I was delivered over to the Yakuti. In three days I reached Olekminsk, the last thirty miles on horseback, my Cossack being quite knocked up from cold and want of exercise. I reached the place early in the evening and went to the abode of the Commissary, who was absent upon his annual excursion for the collecting of the yasack or tribute. His house was however made my home, and there I passed the following day very agreeably, his pretty interesting and modest daughter of fifteen doing the honors of the house. I received

visits from the post-master, secretary, priests and merchants; among the latter was a young Frenchman who had been banished for some heavy crime, but by his subsequent good conduct had been admitted to the rights of a citizen, and is now carrying on trade at Olekminsk.

From Olekminsk to Yakutsk is about four hundred miles, which, except the two last stages, I completed in the canoe. It was on the 1st October that I left, and the 6th when I arrived. The weather proved very cold, and snow fell heavily; the atmosphere dark, and having every appearance of winter: yet, upon the whole the season is considered backward, as on the 1st October the Lena is generally frozen over, and in three weeks more admits of travellers with sledges; but at this time I was enabled to reach within fifty or sixty miles by water, although with some risk and difficulty. A noble chain of hills extend along the right bank of the river with bold precipitous bluffs running into the stream, and with their dark green firs enlivening the otherwise dreary aspect at the present time. The left bank assumed from Olekminsk, a low swampy but rich pasture appearance, the hills taking a new direction. Upon approaching Yakutsk the villages become less frequent, and the stations all longer, extending even to thirty-five and forty miles, yet the natives do every thing with cheerfulness. Nothing of any considerable interest occurred to me, yet I felt as if

existing upon the beautiful prospects and river scenery, which cannot fail of creating a most lively interest.

I reached Bistack, and was here surrounded by the ice, and the boat frozen in. Thus situated, I prosecuted the remaining part of the journey on land. The same kindness of heart which had provided me with a boat to descend the stream, procured me also a horse to ride, and in the evening of the 6th of October I found myself in the hospitable and comfortable residence of his Excellency the governor of Yakutsk, Captain Minitsky of the Russian navy, who had passed many years in the English service, and three of them with my cousin, Captain N. D. Cochrane. In him I found a most worthy, upright, and liberal friend, and warmly interested for my success, to ensure which, every thing I desired was provided me, although it will hereafter appear, that what I now considered as a most provident dress, having been put on in a warm room, turned out to be indeed a poor fit-out for such a journey.

Yakutsk, although a considerable place of trade, and a great pass for the American Company, is ill built, and more scattered even than Irkutsk, in the most exposed of all bleak situations on the left bank of the Lena, which is in summer four miles, and winter two miles and a half wide, appearing, as it really is, one of the finest streams in the world, running a course of more than four thou-

sand miles from its source, near Irkutsk, to the Frozen Sea, which it enters by several mouths. The stream is by no means a rapid one, but rather may be called lazy, as its name appears to import. There are seven thousand inhabitants in the city, of whom the greater part are Russians, and the rest Yakuti. Half a dozen churches, the remains of an old fortress, a monastery, and some tolerable buildings, give it some decency of appearance, yet, I could not help thinking it one of the most dreary looking places I had seen, though I was in the enjoyment of every comfort, and therefore the less disposed to complain.

Yakutsk is not an independent government, but belongs to that of Irkutsk; it has, however, a vice-governor and an independent chancery of its own, who regulate all its affairs, making a mere formal report. It contains, scattered over a wonderful extent of territory, about one hundred and eighty-five thousand inhabitants, composed of Russians, Yakuti, a few Tongousi and fewer Yukagires. Fifty thousand of the whole pay tribute, which is in furs, mostly sables. Those of Vittim and Olekma are considered the finest, blackest, and smallest to be met with, a pair reaching as high as three and four hundred roubles, or from fifteen to twenty pounds sterling. Each taxable individual pays one-quarter of a sable, or in general cases, each family one sable, which, if it cannot be procured, is compromised by the payment of thirty shillings, reducing the tribute

per head to seven shillings and sixpence, as that of a Russian is ten shillings. The greatest part of the population subjected to the government of Yakutsk is on the banks of the Lena, and small streams running into it; no less than twenty thousand families certainly reside on it. The clear revenue derived is half a million of roubles, or twenty-five thousand pounds. The trade carried on by its numerous pedlars is very considerable from the immense quantity of the skins of all sorts. Tobacco, tea, sugar, spirits, nankeens, cottons, kettles, knives, and the like, constitute the cargoes of the traders, for which they receive the skins of bears, wolves, sables, river otters, martins, foxes, and ermines, at very unfair prices. At Yakutsk, however, the value of them is well known. Bear skins twenty and twenty-five shillings; sables, from thirty to one hundred and fifty; a sea-otter, from ten to thirty pounds; river ditto, thirty and forty shillings; a black fox, from five to twenty and even thirty pounds; red and grey fox, two and three pounds—fiery-red, fifteen shillings; the white or arctic fox, five or six shillings, and the blue fox, eight or ten shillings; squirrels, sixpence to one shilling; wolves, ten shillings to a guinea; while I have myself given seven guineas for a black wolf at Omsk: the martins which come by the coast of America, are worth five or six shillings. These are the prices at Yakutsk, but they are purchased of the natives for goods enhanced one hundred and fifty per cent.,

and for one-half the price for which they sell at Yakutsk; returning in most cases a clear profit of two and three hundred per cent., besides their living upon the people during the traffic.

I remained in Yakutsk three weeks, making the needful preparations for my journey during so severe a season of the year. In particular, I looked to the nature of my dress, for the accounts of the cold which I should have to encounter were such, that I considered myself exposed to death, without even the satisfaction of expecting to be buried, from the eternal frost that prevails here. Could, however, this feeling be gratified, the satisfaction would be materially increased by the knowledge that the body itself would enter the next world in the same state that it left this; for every where to the north of Yakutsk, the earth, two feet and a half below the surface, is perpetually frozen; consequently, a carcase buried in it, must remain perpetually the same.

I determined, however, to start the day that the Lena should become passable on the ice. In the mean time I was engaged in such society as Yakutsk could boast; but if I could say little in this respect in favour of Irkutsk, I should almost be silent regarding Yakutsk, where, except the chief's wife, and one or two of the merchants, there is no society, and indeed scarcely one of those can be spoken to by a traveller, especially by one, whose long beard and haggard looks might well

frighten them from me; they were, however safe, on another account, namely, my extreme ignorance of the Russian language.

The way I passed my time at Mr. Minitsky's, was sufficiently regular; I rose early, and always went early to bed; occupied, while day-light lasted, with bringing up my journal; then at a game at billiards; afterwards at dinner, always on the most excellent fare, with wine, rum, and other delicacies. In the evening, with a party of the natives, male and female, at the house of the chief, the ladies, to all appearance dumb, not daring to utter a word, and solely employed in cracking their nuts, a very small species of the cedar nut, which abounds in such quantities as to be made an article of trade to Okotsk and Kamchatka. I am not exaggerating when I say, that half-a-dozen of females will sit down and consume each many hundreds of these nuts, and quit the house without having spoken a word—unless a stolen one, in fear it should be heard. Should tea and cakes be offered, they will sip two, three, or four cups, as long as the samavar (a sort of copper tea urn) has water in it. The manner of their using the sugar with tea, though perhaps not entirely singular, for the Chinese have the same fashion, is remarkably ridiculous; each individual takes a small lump, which he grates between his teeth in such a manner as only to consume a very small part of it: and thus, although the person has drunk three or more cups, the greater portion of sugar

remains, and being placed upon the inverted cup finds its way back to the sugar dish, when the party has broken up; so that, probably, at the feast on the following day, a lady or gentleman may happen to get his old friend back again. Nor is it with sugar alone that this system of economy is adopted. Biscuits, cakes, &c. on being presented, are received and placed behind them, on the chair, to keep warm, and their fragments also are ultimately restored to the basket. Thus, luxuries of these kinds are rendered cheap, for the custom is general, and I have often witnessed the fact, not indeed at Mr. Minitsky's, but at other respectable houses, the inmates of which knew no better, and were ignorant of the chief's disliking it.

While the ladies are thus cracking their nuts, staring, and listening, and speechless, the gentlemen are employed in drinking rum or rye-brandy punch, as their tastes may dictate. Nor is even good rum a scarce article here, coming as it does by way of Kamchatka. I was one feast-day on a visit to a respectable old gentleman, one of the council; there were no chairs, but a long table was spread with fish pies, a piece of roast beef, boiled deers' tongues, and some wild berries in a tart. The first thing presented is a glass of brandy, which I refused, knowing the chief to have sent some wine; this I was offered and accepted, when I was told by my friend the chief, that it was not the custom to accept any thing of that kind the first time, but

to await the third. Relying upon the chief's knowledge of the world, I refused the next glass of wine, which was offered me twice, and need not say I ultimately lost it, probably from the practice of economizing good wine in a place where it can seldom be purchased.

Great parade is kept up in this part of the world with respect to rank, and no lady visits the wife of the chief or vice-governor, without kissing her hand; while the latter sits motionless upon the sofa without making the least acknowledgment of such a condescension. The same custom was also established at Irkutsk, with Governor Treskins's wife, who being the mother of Mrs. Minitsky, of course initiated her daughter into the mysteries of her importance: she probably finds a sad falling off when at St. Petersburg. This absurd custom is carried so far, that the priests are compelled to offer thanks and prayers for them, individually, every Sunday at church. Mr. Minitsky is, however, a good man, and an exceedingly clever governor, equalled by few in Siberia; his situation is of course a good one, and may be made equal to his utmost desires by fraud, trade, extortion, and corruption. But latterly the conduct of the Governor-general Speranski has put all the people in office, in Siberia, upon the *qui vive.*

That bribery is still carried on to great excess, there can be no doubt, nor is it possible for any man or men to prevent it; it is the practice, and carries here an appearance of right or law. It is the cus-

tom of Siberia, that the chiefs are allowed to receive presents on their names', or their Saints' day. A governor of a province, who could not reach in time to be present at the feast of the commissary of Izpravnick, and had not taken upon himself the government, was willing to make a good beginning. He accordingly sent an express to the commissary regretting his absence, at the same time forwarding to him a pair of elegantly mounted pistols, and reminding him that the Governor's name's day would take place that week, at which his attendance, &c. The old miserly commissary, who had hitherto resisted the custom of payment to other saints, could not resist such a challenge, and attended the feast at the cost of ten thousand roubles. Here is an instance of a Governor openly offering a bribe, as well as of openly demanding one. They are but the representatives of much worse, as I shall hereafter have an opportunity of observing.

My dresses completed, and the river having, according to custom, been passed and declared closed, I packed up my knapsack, and other baggage, as I was provided also with a couple of bags of black biscuit through the kindness of my host, with a piece of roast beef, a few dried fish, half a dozen pounds of tea, and twenty pounds of sugar-candy, besides fifty pounds of tobacco, and a keg of vodkey, corn-brandy, a most indispensable article on such a journey, whether for my own or others' consumption. I had besides a pipe, flint, steel, and axe, and what was of most importance, a Cossack companion, who

indeed proved invaluable to me. My destination was Nishney Kolyma, distant about one thousand eight hundred miles, which were to be travelled over in the coldest season of the year, and in what is esteemed the coldest part of the world. All this I heeded nothing, and provided, *as I thought*, with warm clothing, considered myself as proof against at least fifty degrees of Reaumur's frost. The spirit thermometer at Yakutsk, measured at Mr. Minitsky's house, was 27° of cold of Reaumur, or nearly the same number of degrees below the zero of Fahrenheit, yet I walked about the streets of Yakutsk with only my nankeen surtout, trowsers of the same material, shoes, and worsted stockings: a flannel waistcoat, which had lost its principal virtue, was the only warm clothing; yet I can truly say I was not at all incommoded. The natives felt surprised, pitied my apparent forlorn and hopeless situation, not seeming to consider that when the mind and body are in constant motion the elements can have little effect upon the person. I feel confident that most of the miseries of human life are brought on by want of a solid education, of firm reliance on a bountiful and ever attendant Providence—of a spirit of perseverance—of patience under fatigue and privations, and a resolute determination to hold to the point of duty, never to shrink while life retains a spark, or while "a shot is in the locker," as sailors say. Often indeed have I felt myself in difficult and trying circumstances, from cold, or hunger, or fatigue; although, thank God, not to the

degree which my unfortunate brother officer Capt. Franklin experienced, yet still to a degree beyond what would, in England, be considered sufficient to cure me of my wandering propensities; and I may affirm with gratitude, that I have never felt happier than even in the encountering of these difficulties. Thus, in the present case, I had no second parka, or frock; no knee preservers, blanket, or bed; an indifferent pair of gloves, and a cold cap; no guard for my chin, ears, or nose; in short I was not properly provided, which I found out too late, and attribute the preservation of my life solely to the strength of my constitution, which I have never seen equalled to this hour.

It was on the last day of October that I departed from Yakutsk with my Cossack, the thermometer being at 27° of frost. I had, through the kindness of my friend Mr. Minitsky, been provided with a couple of sledges, and every recommendation within his power. It is impossible for me to describe the different emotions which agitated my breast as I quitted the last limit of civilization, of the friends I had made, and of all that could attach me to society; for although I felt a confidence of meeting with hospitality and every assistance I could desire, still to a sensible mind, the enterprise was formidable, going as I did alone, and ignorant even of the Russian language, much more of that of the Tartar tribes. For the means of meeting the latter difficulty, I was indebted to the numerous people who spoke English, French, and German, one of

whom I met at almost every halting-place, when the dulness of a Cossack interpreter could hardly afford me the means of amusement, much less of information.

The cold I suffered in the sledge, and the jolting movement attending the passage of the ice on the Lena, now crumbled by the stream into hillocks, soon roused me, and I jumped out, preferring to walk, and though I had my feet almost frozen while in the sledge, the exercise and weight of my clothes, soon brought me to a state of perspiration, by the time I had reached fifteen miles, when I halted for the night in a pleasant yourte. The next, a cold and windy day, I resumed my journey, alternately walking and riding on horse-back, to escape at once fatigue and cold, and measured forty miles over a level but well wooded country. I felt much pleased with the attentions of the Yakuti, who provided me, as I arrived, with milk, meat, and not seldom with clotted cream. Such were my delicacies until I reached the banks of the river Aldan, a noble stream running into the Lena. I had passed a small place called Meera, where are two churches, for the performance of divine worship in the Yakut dialect, at which, although I understood nothing of it, I attended. A more dreary looking place I have never seen. It overhangs the banks of a considerable lake. The situation in summer may be better; but what can be otherwise than dreary in Siberia during the winter? The latter part of the journey to Aldan

was through romantic valleys, whose numerous streams and lakes supply abundance of fish. They are also studded with numerous traps of various descriptions for foxes, bears, sables, and wolves; and the quantity of animals of the chace is considered abundant. There appeared a considerable population, and many wealthy knezes or princes; who, wherever I met them, were kind and hospitable. I reached Aldan the fourth day, the distance being about one hundred and fifty miles; the last day's journey sixty. My face was suffering greatly.

At Aldan I staid two days, while horses were procuring for the post which I was accompanying; but finding them still tardy, I made the prince understand, that unless I had them next morning, we must return to Yakutsk: and the better to persuade him of my intention, I availed myself of a letter in English to Mr. Minitsky, the contents of which really were to thank him for his kindness and hospitality to me, but which I represented as a letter of complaint against the Yakut prince. The latter took it, though apparently in the greatest apprehension of its conseqences, and actually himself delivered it at Yakutsk, by way of atonement. Mr. Minitsky repeated the circumstance upon my return. Poor fellow! however I might turn the matter for my own benefit, little intention had I of making a complaint, where indeed there was no fault. My letter, however, had the effect of procuring horses on the third day, and we departed

in high glee, as the same beasts were to carry us to Baralass, distant one hundred and fifty miles, which will be the less wonder, when it is observed, that the horses go loaded with two hundred weight from Yakutsk to the Kolyma, and back again, through roads and over a country almost impassable.

On the sixth of November I crossed the Aldan and breakfasted at a solitary yourte (at ten miles), completing in the evening thirty miles, where we halted in a cabin about ten feet square. Had it, however, been much worse or smaller, I must have felt thankful, for I had been severely pinched by the effects of the cold and the wind in my face. A good fire, a cup of tea, and a sound slumber, with pleasant dreams, perfectly refreshed me by the ensuing morning. The country had of late been level, but at twenty miles I became enveloped in a lofty chain of mountains, which I had been for some time gradually ascending, and which are called the Toukoulan chain, from the word Touku, which, in the Yakut language, signifies 'noisy'; as indeed the river of that name does roar down its precipitous banks. In the same chain also the Yana has its source. We halted for the night at the foot of a mountainous peak, sheltered from the cold north wind; and as this was the first night which I was to pass in the open air, I shall describe the manner of it, in order that it may be known how far (contrary to my calculations) our situation was susceptible even of comfort.

The first thing on my arrival, was to unload the horses, loosen their saddles or pads, take the bridle out of their mouths, and tie them to a tree in such a manner that they could not eat. The Yakuti then with their axes proceeded to fell timber, while I and the Cossack with our lopatkas or wooden spades cleared away the snow which was generally a couple of feet deep. We then spread branches of the pine tree, to fortify us from the damp or cold earth beneath us: a good fire was now soon made, and each bringing a leathern bag from the baggage, furnished himself with a seat. We then put the kettle on the fire, and soon forgot the sufferings of the day. Yet the weather was so cold that we were almost obliged to creep into the fire; and as I was much worse off than the rest of the party for warm clothing, I had recourse to every stratagem I could devise to keep my blood in circulation. It was barely possible to keep one side of the body from freezing, while the other might be said to be roasting. Upon the whole, I slept tolerably well, although I was obliged to get up five or six times during the night to take a walk or run for the benefit of my feet. While thus employed, I discovered that the Yakuti had drawn the fire from our side to theirs, a trick which I determined to counteract the next night. I should here observe, that it is the custom of the Yakuti to get to leeward of the fire, and then undressing themselves, put the whole of their clothes as a shelter for one side of their bodies, while the other

side receives a thorough roasting from exposure to the fire; this plan also gives them the benefit of the warmth of their own bodies. The thermometer during the day had ranged from 20° to 25°, according to the elevation of the sun.

The following day, at thirty miles, we again halted in the snow, when I made a horse-shoe fire, which I found had the effect I desired, of keeping every part of me alike warm, and I actually slept well without any other covering than my clothes thrown over me, whereas before I had only the consolation of knowing that if I was in a freezing state with one half of my body, the other was meanwhile roasting to make amends. On the third night I reached the foot of the mountainous pass which may be said to lead to Northern Siberia. My route had hitherto lain generally on the banks of the Toukoulan, which runs along a picturesque valley on the western range of the mountains, and is well wooded with fir, larch, and alder. Upon reaching thus far, I looked up at what I had yet to perform, and I confess felt astonished, not at the height, but how it could be practicable to get up a slippery and almost trackless road. However we commenced, and mainly by preferring the deep snow, as I uniformly did, at last gained the summit, but not without great fatigue; a horse could not carry a person up under a considerable time, and it took me two hours at least. We sat down, my Cossack and I, to gain breath and wait for the Yakuti with the baggage—in the mean time

smoking a pipe; but it was too cold to remain,—we therefore prepared to descend. As to keeping my feet, however, that was impossible; I therefore lay down and slid to the bottom of the most dangerous part, a feat for which I had nearly paid dear, by coming in contact with a horse which had taken the same expeditious mode of descending. The path was so narrow, that one error would have pitched me for ever into the abyss of snow beneath; and although not deep, would have prevented a return, unless I had fortunately fallen with my feet downwards; and falling on one side I found very dangerous, unless somebody was near to render assistance. I soon reached what I may term a charity yourte, being erected by the community in general for the accommodation and preservation of travellers. It consists of a twelve feet square room, with a small anti-room which serves as an entry, and may be properly termed a log-house, having no window, unless a large opening in the roof may be so termed. The centre is left to form a neat hearth or fire-place, on the same level as the sleeping places round it, which are six in number, and about eighteen inches off the ground, leaving a narrow passage between the hearth and bed places, which are formed of earth, boarded up and planked over: they were indeed very comfortable cells. Outside, the building is supported and banked up with snow, and the roof is covered with the same article, no fear being entertained of its ever melting: the only inconve-

nience is from the smoke not having a free outlet, unless the door is open, which makes it very cold.

We passed a tolerable night, in company with some other travellers bound to Yakutsk, and next morning resumed our journey in fine weather; and in this way at the expiration of six days, reached Baralass, alternately sleeping in snow, or in an uninhabited yourte, as our progress made it necessary.

The yourtes are placed at an inconvenient distance, being twenty-five miles asunder, too great in bad weather, and too little in fine; twelve miles would be preferable, as travellers would then always have a resting place at one or the other (at least where wood is to be had), and every comfort. The country over which I had come may be deemed on the whole very picturesque, the road lying between two elevated ranges of mountains; the valleys exceedingly well wooded, but gradually diminishing as the summit is approached, where nothing but the purest frozen snow is to be seen. There are also innumerable valleys, emanating from the principal one, which produce a beautiful effect, besides furnishing fine timber; but with all its beauty, or grandeur of scenery, it is dreary and desolate, not an individual dwelling in the whole extent from Aldan to Baralass; a distance, equal to half the length of England.

I was civilly received by a Yakut prince, who gave me a supply of frozen milk, and we resumed

our journey to Tabalak: we made forty miles the first day, by a good road, the snow being hard frozen. The little river Sartan, runs along the valley and unites with the Yana. I met a few hunting Yakuti, armed with bows and arrows, some on horseback, and others on foot. They appear an extremely civil people. The following day with great labour, walking and riding alternately, we reached forty miles, the horses distressed, and the guides worse; the weather, snow and wind. For myself I was much disheartened, but I felt that I had no choice; go I must, for return I would not, had things been ten times worse. The third was the coldest day I had experienced, the thermometer at twenty-eight and thirty below the freezing point of Reaumur, attended with some snow. We passed several habitations of the Yakuti, who invariably offered us a lodging, and provision for the day; and always appropriated to me the best birth, which is in that corner of the room under the image, and opposite to the fire. We now left the river and valley of Sartan, crossed a considerable range of hills to the eastward, and entered upon an open country, which we got over more easily, the path being very fair. Passing the banks of the Boroulak, we came in time to witness the result of one of their field sports, in the death of a deer, who had been levelled by a rifle-shot: of course I had the most luxurious part presented to me, being the marrow of the fore legs. I did not find

it disagreeable though eaten raw, and warm from life; in a frozen state I should consider it a great delicacy. The animal was the size of a good calf, weighing about two hundred pounds; such a quantity of meat may serve four or five good Yakuts, for a single meal, with whom it is ever famine or feast, gluttony or starvation.

We reached Tabalak on the sixth day from Baralass, the latter part of the road lying on the Boroulak, varying from excellent to execrable, as we changed from the river to the banks: the distance is two hundred and thirty miles. It is not badly peopled considering the access to it, as compared with the former part of my journey. Here we overtook an expedition bound to the river Kolyma, for the purpose of discovery, under the charge of the steersman. It consisted of one hundred and fifty loaded horses, apparently in a sad state from being too heavily laden. Independent of the expedition, there were on the road a great many pedlars bound to the same place to be ready for the fair of the Tschutskoi. What will not avarice or ambition prompt man to? But I am not the person to be astonished, who am voluntarily travelling the same road, without necessity or occasion. The journey is at present rendered increasingly laborious by numerous trees which have fallen; whether from the effects of wind, the force of the waters, or natural decay. It is no uncommon thing during the spring, for the trees which have been

left by the winter's blasts or summer's deluge, to salute the traveller in passing, at least if he should happen to step upon the roots, which are almost level with the surface of the earth: so perfectly frozen is the whole country north of 60° of latitude.

At Tabalak I had a pretty good specimen of the appetite of a child, whose age (as I understood from the steersman, who spoke some English and less French) did not exceed five years. I had observed the child crawling on the floor, and scraping up with its thumb the tallow grease which fell from a lighted candle, and I inquired in surprise whether it proceeded from hunger or liking of the fat. I was told from neither, but simply from the habit in both Yakuti and Tongousi of eating whenever there is food, and never permitting any thing that can be eaten to be lost. I gave the child a candle made of the most impure tallow,—a second,—and third,—and all were devoured with avidity. The steersman then gave him several pounds of sour frozen butter; this also he immediately consumed; lastly, a large piece of yellow soap,—all went the same road; but as I was now convinced that the child would continue to gorge as long as it could receive any thing, I begged my companion to desist.

As to the statement of what a man can or will eat, either as to quality or quantity, I am afraid it would be quite incredible; in fact, there is no-

thing in the way of fish or meat, from whatever animal, however putrid or unwholesome, but they will devour with impunity, and the quantity only varies from what they have, to what they can get. I have repeatedly seen a Yakut or a Tongouse devour forty pounds of meat in a day. The effect is very observable upon them, for from thin and meagre-looking men, they will become perfectly pot-bellied. Their stomachs must be differently formed to ours, or it would be impossible for them to drink off at a draught, as they really do, their tea and soup scalding hot (so hot, at least, that an European would have difficulty in even sipping at it), without the least inconvenience. I have seen three of these gluttons consume a rein-deer at one meal; nor are they nice as to the choice of parts; nothing being lost, not even the contents of the bowels, which, with the aid of fat and blood, are converted into black puddings.

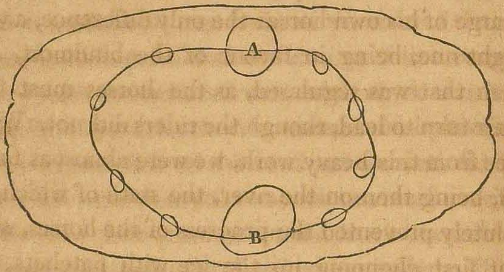
For an instance in confirmation of this, no doubt, extraordinary statement, I shall refer to the voyages of the Russian admiral, Saritcheff. "No sooner," he says, "had they stopped to rest or spend the night, than they had their kettle on the fire, which they never left until they pursued their journey, spending the intervals for rest in eating, and, in consequence of no sleep, were drowsy all the next day." The admiral also says, "That such extraordinary voracity was never attended with

any ill effects, although they made a practice of devouring, at one meal, what would have killed any other person. The labourers," the admiral says, "had an allowance of four poods, or one hundred and forty-four English pounds of fat, and seventy-two pounds of rye flour, yet in a fortnight they complained of having nothing to eat. Not crediting the fact, the Yakuts said that one of them was accustomed to consume at home, in the space of a day, or twenty-four hours, the hind quarter *of a large ox, twenty pounds of fat, and a proportionate quantity of melted butter for his drink.* The appearance of the man not justifying the assertion, the admiral had a mind to try his gormandizing powers, and for that purpose he had a thick porridge of rice boiled down with three pounds of butter, weighing together twenty-eight pounds, and although the glutton had *already breakfasted*, yet did he sit down to it with great eagerness, and consumed the whole without stirring from the spot: and, except that his stomach betrayed more than an ordinary fullness, he betrayed no sign of molestation or injury, but would have been ready to renew his gluttony the following day." So much for the admiral, on the truth of whose account I place perfect reliance.

Tabalak is the residence of a corporal of the Cossacks, who has the charge of the post, and commands over the surrounding Yakuti. He is

married, and appears to live here with tolerable comfort. The country round is studded with lakes, producing abundance of fine fish. I staid a couple of days to refresh myself, and, on the 22d of November, I resumed the journey. The weather was now very cold, and my knees became exceedingly painful, as I thought, from sitting too much on horseback, consequently I walked more, in spite of the fatigue; going over fifteen and twenty miles a-day on foot, and always in those places where it was difficult for the horse to carry me. The first night we halted on the banks of a small lake, where some fishermen were hauling their nets, although the ice was twenty inches deep. The plan is indeed ingenious, and proves that "necessity is the mother of invention." Having fixed upon the spot, a large hole is made in the most distant part opposite to the place to which the fish are to be hauled, and then holes are also made from it on each side circularly towards the point where the fish are to be caught: the distance from hole to hole about fifteen or twenty feet: the whole of the net is then let down the first opening, as are the ropes attached to the hauling of it, which ropes are fastened to a long pole, which under the ice conducts the ropes from hole to hole. Both ends are taken up at the last and largest opening, and the net is thus hauled: and a considerable quantity of fish are caught. The following figure will represent the

plan, the size and distance of the apertures being proportioned to the size of the net and length of the ropes:



A, representing the opening where the net is first sunk; B, where it is hauled down; the other openings, those made for communication; and the space within the outer circle, the lake.

We halted at a most magnificent range of mountains, running from east to west-north-west, with lofty projecting bluffs and terrific precipices, on lands gently rising from the thickly wooded basis into elevated peaks and long extents of table lands, in all the wild variety of nature. I regretted my inability to sketch this beautiful view.

The route lay along the river Tostak twenty-five miles; then crossing the mountains into the valley, and on to the river Dogdoa, now deeply hid in snow, and occasioning great labour to man and horse. We were frequently obliged to halt and clear away the snow with our spades, to enable

the animals to proceed; at other times to unload them, and drag the baggage for two or three hundred yards. In these cases all distinctions of rank are laid aside, every person assisting and taking charge of his own horse: the only difference, a very slight one, being in favour of the hindmost, and even that was regulated, as the horses must take their turn to lead, though the riders did not. When free from this heavy work, we were almost as badly off, being then on the river, the state of which absolutely prevented the progress of the horses, without first chopping up the ice with hatchets, and then carefully leading the animals. In short, such was the nature of our road, that we had almost to carry the horses through the snow, and support them over ice so clear and slippery, that oil poured over it could not have made it worse. With all the assistance we could give, they constantly fell groaning under their loads, and it was really painful even to witness their sufferings. Three days passed in this manner, and I felt that if ever I had earned my coarse fare, it was during that period. Two horses had been allotted to me, and my plan was, to conduct one of them over the worst part, tie him to a tree, and then return for the other—and so on. The Yakuti felt grateful for the willingness with which I took my share of the labour.

The next part of our road lay along the little rivers Kabbregah, Koudouroukui, Rasoka, and Ka-

men-da-Maslo; after which, leaving the mountainous part, we got upon an extensive plain, and reached a charity yourte very late, having been obliged to abandon one of the horses. I was now suffering much in my feet, on which the frozen perspiration had formed blisters, in which state I had also to encounter water even upon the ice. This, as it appears to me, is occasioned by the intenseness of the frost contracting the ice, till in the end, it divides about the centre; cold being of so peculiar a quality, as in the first place to expand, and ultimately to contract all fluids it affects. The same observation applies to the ground, which cracks alike whether from the effect of heat or cold; indeed, so powerful is the congelation of water, that it even splits mountains asunder, a fact which is here every where visible. Many of these mountains are of slate, and the rest appear but a common sort of rock and granite; but on the banks of the river Kamen-da-Maslo, there is produced a fossil or an earthy substance called in Russian, Kamennoye Maslo, or stone butter, which is eaten in various ways, as well by Russians as Tongousi—it is of a yellowish cream colour, and not unpleasant in taste, but is forbidden, as pernicious in its effects, producing various disorders, as the gravel, &c.

This earthy matter is found to be a fossil or salt, oozing out of rocks in many parts of Siberia, but

chiefly from those near the rivers Irtish and Yenesei. When it is exposed to the air in dry weather it hardens, but in wet weather it again becomes soft or liquid.

The horses requiring much rest from their fatigues, we did not depart until late. The intermediate time I consumed in various employments, chiefly by contrasting in my mind the populous cities and towns I had left with the remote and widely distant villages I now meet, and "those vast and uncultivated tracts," as is observed by Talleyrand, when speaking upon society, "traversed rather than peopled by men who belong to no nation. It is a novel spectacle for a traveller who, taking his departure from a large town where society is perfected, watches every degree of civilization and industry becoming every moment weaker, till he arrives in a few days at the clumsy and coarse hut, constructed with the trunks of fallen trees. Such a journey is a practical analysis of the origin and progress of nations, where we have a complicated aggregate to arrive at the most simple elements: every day we lose sight of some one of those inventions which our unceasing wants have rendered necessary, and seem to travel backward in the history of the progress of the human mind. If such a spectacle invites the imagination, if we are delighted to find in space what alone belongs to time, we must be content

to see very few social ties among those men who appear so little to belong to the same association, so little to possess an uniformity of character." These ideas, so congenial with my own, occupied me in a melancholy mood till I rose, and, looking at the grandeur of the scenery, reflected, that wherever I was, the same Providence was there also.

The extensive chain of mountains viewed from the spot where I write this, is truly fine; they run from east-north-east to west-south-west; the river Rasoka runs along the eastern range, and is visible for many miles, within the two ranges, which appear to have been severed asunder by some convulsion of nature. I was, however, obliged to quit the scene, and pursue my journey over a country agreeably diversified with hill and dale, the path lying first along the banks of the Beekhall, and then of the Bludenaya, where I halted in a most beautiful and close valley, surrounded on all sides by lofty and well clothed mountains.

On the 9th day I started for Zashiversk, distant forty miles, the first twenty of which was by a rising path, until I reached the greatest elevation of a lofty mountain, with some peril and more difficulty. The scene reminded me of my journey across the sand hills at the back of Vera Cruz, with this difference only, that the gale, generally attending both, obscures in the one instance the atmosphere with sand, and in the other with snow;

in both no traces of a path can long exist if there be any wind. The snow lay from four to six feet deep, and our situation was at one time extremely dangerous, being completely ignorant which way to turn; not the smallest vestige of verdure was to be seen, and, except a few crosses (another resemblance to Vera Cruz), which were sure to receive the offering of the Yakuti, consisting of horse-hair drawn from the tail or mane of horses, in token of their gratitude for safe arrival at the summit, nothing was visible. I left this desert of snow, and rapidly descended the north-east side of the hills, enjoying the magnificent winter scene which gradually opens to view. I soon reached the banks of the Choukalah, and the more considerable Galanima, and then along a well-wooded valley, gained the rapid Indigirka just at the point where the latter falls into it; not long after which I entered the town of Zashiversk.

Of all the places I have ever seen, bearing the name of city or town, this is the most dreary and desolate; my blood froze within me as I beheld and approached the place. All that I have seen in passing rocky or snowy sierras or passes in Spain, in traversing the wastes of Canada, or in crossing the mountains in North America, or the Pyrennees, or the Alps, cannot be compared with the desolation of the scene around me! The first considerable halting-place from Yakutsk, the half-way house, is nine hundred or one thousand miles removed from

a civilized place. Such a spot gives name to a commissariat, and contains seven habitations of the most miserable kind, inhabited severally by two clergymen, each separate, a non-commissioned officer, and a second in command; a post-master, a merchant, and an old widow. I have, during my service in the navy, and during a period when seamen were scarce, seen a merchant ship with sixteen guns, and only fifteen men, but I never before saw a town with only seven inhabitants.

The distance to Zashiversk from Tabalak is two hundred and fifty miles, throughout the whole of which there is not a single inhabited dwelling, and but eight charity yourtes. The weather had, generally speaking, been calm and mild, seldom exceeding 25° of frost of Reaumur. This miserable town is, however, at least an hospitable place. It is seated on the right bank of the Indigirka, which flows with great rapidity, and during the summer carries every thing before it. The mountains to the west are bold and bare, producing nothing besides a few dwarf pines; these mountains confine the river for forty miles farther to the north, where it spreads and forms a continuation of lakes until it enters the Icy Sea.

Fish is fine and most abundant, and constitutes almost the only support of the *numerous* inhabitants. There is not a blade of grass near the place, and no horses are kept nearer than thirty miles; so that there is no little difficulty in bringing the hay

which maintains a couple of cows. The planner or proposer of this site for a town might deserve punishment, but certainly less than that of being made its perpetual commander. I remained three days, living in a state of luxury to which I had, of late, been a stranger. Hares, wolves, bears, wild rein-deer, and elks, which abound here, were my ordinary food; foxes, which are also in great plenty, are here used as food. Bear and wolf meat I found good when very hungry; rein-deer I found a delicate diet; but elk I think surpasses every thing I have tasted, having all the nutriment of beef, with all the delicate flavour of the rein-deer.

On the 3d of December I quitted the town of Zashiversk, not ungrateful for the hospitality of its poor inhabitants who had supplied me with plenty of fish, here eaten in a raw state, and which to this hour I remember as the greatest delicacy I have ever tasted. Spite of our prejudices, there is nothing to be compared to the melting of raw fish in the mouth; oysters, clotted cream, or the finest jelly in the world is nothing to it: nor is it only a small quantity that may be eaten of this precious commodity. I myself have finished a whole fish which in its frozen state might have weighed two or three pounds, and with black biscuit and a glass of rye brandy, have defied either nature or art to prepare a better meal. It is cut up or shaved into slices with a sharp knife, from head to tail, and thence derives the name of Stroganĭna: to complete the

luxury only salt and pepper were wanting. Having charged myself with a leather bag of these, I resumed my route along the crystal surface of the Indigirka. My first day's journey brought me more acquainted with the power and use of dogs, although I have seen them in London drawing a poor sailor who had lost both his legs; here, however, water or ice, fish, fire-wood, travellers and their goods, and every thing that convenience can demand, is drawn by those domestic animals.

At forty miles the mountains diverge from the course of the river to the east-north-east and west-south-west, the former chain going towards the Kolyma, and the latter embanking the Yana; the country between them a vast desert. The 20th day we had passed thirty miles, still on the shallow, transparent, and slippery Indigirka, which gave us another lesson of our hard work. Many islands lay in the river which, during the summer, present a scene of desolation almost incredible, from the effects of the wonderful overflowing of the rivers. In journeying along the river, my horse twice fell under me upon his broadside, yet without injury to me, as I used no stirrups, my feet hanging at liberty for the sake of kicking the horse's side to keep me warm. My route lying north, the mountains gradually disappeared, as I entered on the seemingly boundless plain. We tarried at a comfortable clean yourte, where I was regaled with excellent cream and wild berries, somewhat similar to black

currants, called here broosneeka. I continued over a flat country, and lakes communicating with one another by small streams, suffering much at times from the cold, especially in the knees, which although not sensibly cold, had a feeling of deadness and painful fatigue, which I could not account for till a pedlar explained to me by signs and words, that if I did not alter my plan I should certainly lose both my legs above the knees. They appeared indeed a little inflamed, owing, as he said, to the inadequate protection of the knee joints, which on horseback are more than ordinarily exposed, all the defence they had being a single leather, in sometimes 30° of frost of Reaumur. I considered that I was still bound to the northward, and that the extreme of winter had not yet come upon me, and therefore thought it better to accept a pair of souturee (knee preservers) which he very kindly offered. The service they did me is astonishing: from that moment I had less pain and more heat, and became fully satisfied that the extremities are alone to be taken care of.

On the third day after my departure from Zashiversk, my liquor was at an end from the effects of a very common sort of leak—it had been tapped too often. I could do nothing but bull the barrel, that is, put a little water into it, and thus preserve at least the appearance of vodkey. The nights were particularly beautiful, and the moon was visible during the whole twenty-four hours.

My eyes had now become painful from the effects of the snow on the eye-lashes, but I was still content, and moved forward cheerfully to the scene of my destination. On the sixth day, over a miserable road, the fatigues of which it is useless to repeat, I reached a miserable abode, whose inhabitants were in a state of actual starvation, completely resigned to their fate, and only wishing to die. Remonstrance had some effect in rousing them, and warm tea had more, for they determined to accompany us to the next post station, whose inhabitants, at our instigation, gave them a part of their own fish, "although the wants of nature, frugal as they were, but scarce supported their own lives." Over lakes and through low forests I at length reached the summit of the chain of hills which separate the commissariats of Zashiversk and Kolyma; then, descending rapidly, entered a charity yourte twenty miles farther. I found a fire ready lighted, owing to the considerate attention and orders of Baron Wrangel, who keeps a man employed here until the whole expedition has passed.—The eighth day I reached Sordak, three hundred and twenty miles from Zashiversk. This stage was accomplished with great difficulty, owing to the unusual depth of the snow, and the wretched condition of the horses: mine had failed. The late high winds had also obliterated every trace of the path and we were frequently obliged to return and start afresh, sounding the depth

of the snow as we went. At length, however, we arrived, and in good health, although the weather was now become very severe.

At Sordak there is a post house and a corporal of the Cossacks, with a few other yourtes for the Yakuti, who cut and bring hay and fire-wood, and fish and hunt; in short, maintain the establishment, upon the terms of paying no yasack. They also accompany the post, and other travellers, and return with the government horses. This may serve, therefore, as a description of the other stations, of which there are but eight in the whole distance from Yakutsk to the Kolyma, a distance of eighteen hundred miles. The country round Sordak is low and marshy, with numerous lakes, and much fine wood, and is indeed far superior to that on the southern side of the hills. The officer who keeps the station is grandson of the celebrated Vladimir Atlassof, who discovered, and in part conquered, Kamtchatka. He entered into a history of his adventures, very little of which I understood. He is marked by a vermillion spot on his cheek, and subject to a complaint called Imerak, which will be hereafter mentioned.

Among the guests was the priest of Sredne Kolymsk, or Middle Kolymsk, who had arrived to christen some infants, as well as perhaps to drink an extra allowance of spirits; for his reverence informed me that the glass was at 43° of frost of Reaumur, in spite of the fineness of the day—the sun, in fact, visible;

and though I was but little north of the arctic circle, the date being 10th (22d) December. The old gentleman probably knew as much of a thermometer as I did of the Greek mass. Having well refreshed ourselves with the flesh of a bear and a horse, which had the day before fought each other to death, we departed on the 14th towards the Kolyma. The first night we put up at a yourte, forty miles, encompassed by squalling children, growling and howling dogs, and a scolding and tyrannical hostess. There wanted only a smoky chimney to render it complete. Having procured wood for the night, on the morrow we departed, but not before I had got into a scrape, for hanging my cap and gloves upon the pins which bear the images of worship. The infuriated woman complained to the Cossack of the insult. The Cossack told her I was an English pope, or priest, and that I was privileged: the length of my locks, as well as beard, was proof positive, and thenceforward I was called the English priest.

The 2d day we reached a large and neat yourte, inhabited by two aged brothers who had become Christians. The eldest had discarded two of his wives as a proof of his faith, although the younger had buried three, and was enjoying happiness with a fourth, no great sign of his faith, or strict attention to the orders of the Greek church. Next day I crossed the Alazea, a considerable river, running into the Frozen Ocean. This part of the world is most abundantly rich in fish, game, and cattle; and

the few inhabitants upon its banks live exceedingly well. They supplied me with a couple of geese, with ducks, and frozen fish, which is of the first quality. From the Alazea I kept company with a pedler, half Yakut and half Russian. I have seen several of this mixed breed; and although their parents are ordinary in appearance, have hardly ever seen the children, whether male or female, otherwise than with the most beautiful skin, and pleasingly formed features. They have also a delicate appearance, which adds much to the general interest.

On the 19th December I reached Sredne Kolymsk, being one hundred and fifty miles from Sordak. The day was very cold, but the weather was calm. The country has been very low, but I am now getting into the vicinity of elevated lands. Crossing the magnificent stream, I shortly reached the town or commissariat, where an empty house was soon provided for me; and being supplied with firing, attendants, and provisions, I regaled myself, through the kindness of the Commissary; and in short, remained nearly five days, owing to their inability to supply me with a fresh Cossack. In the interval I employed myself by walking about, making observations, and compiling my journal.

The priest having, with the Commissary and principal people of the place, paid me a visit, the former entered my habitation crossing himself, as is customary; then advancing to me, who stood

offering him my hand, in the English style, I was honoured with his blessing, which I acknowledged by an exchange of the compliment. The old gentleman retreated in astonishment, and demanding who and what I was, my Cossack answered I was an English priest; upon which the reverend gentleman observed he was in error, as one priest could not give a benediction to another. He then shook hands, and expressed his friendship for me. Another instance of the effects of my beard and of more value to me, though less to the priests of Siberia, arose from the circumstance of the Yakuti coming to me frequently with the right hand open, and supported by the left, which I interpreted into an asking of alms, and accordingly gave them something to eat. This, however, they evidently declined, and still continued their supplicating posture. My Cossack afterwards gave me to understand that I was mistaken, for that they were begging a blessing. I therefore determined to satisfy the next Yakut, who appeared during one of my rambles along the river; and when a well dressed Yakut knez, or prince, demanded my blessing in passing, I gave it to him in the Russian style, as well as to his family when I left them. The prince began to unload a Souma, or leathern bag, and following me kissed my hand, and insisted upon my accepting a couple of sables; nor could all my entreaties induce him to take them back, that being considered the greatest insult.

Sredne Kolymsk stands upon the left bank of the Kolyma, and is the residence of the Commissary, Secretary, and a few attending Cossacks. There are about twelve or fifteen inhabited dwellings, containing about one hundred people; though, with its outhouses, baths, &c. it has the appearance of a large village. Its central position is the reason of its adoption as the residence of the Commissary. It produces immense quantities of superior fish, serving equally for their own consumption and that of their dogs, which are numerous.

With a poor hobbydehoy fellow, in lieu of my faithful and affectionate Cossack, Peter Trechekoff, I departed on Christmas day, in spite of the remonstrances and invitation of the Commissary to pass the holydays with him, and, directing my route along the river Kolyma, could not repress an inclination to melancholy, and a feeling of the loneliness of my situation. I felt that all my sorrows were yet to come, and that my difficulties had hardly begun. Yet my determination was firm, had appearances been ten times worse.

At twenty miles I visited an old Yakut prince upwards of ninety years old, in the perfect enjoyment of all his faculties. He was a companion and acquaintance of the unfortunate Shalaouroff in the year 1764, then fifty-six years ago, when that adventurous person completed two expeditions to the Frozen Sea, and is supposed to have perished in the third. I inquired of the old man respecting

Billings and his party; he said that was as yesterday. He has a comfortable dwelling, and is in good circumstances, though a subsistence by the chace seems very precarious now-a-days, as most of the animals, especially the rein deer and elks, have been driven to the north and east.

Here I quitted the river, and then over a flat country, abounding in lakes and low brush-wood, completed forty miles: the weather was exceedingly cold, the thermometer never being above thirty-five degrees. The hills to the east had gradually disappeared, and the following day we reached fifty miles by a good path.

The third day I made thirty, and the fourth day forty miles, mostly along the river, and through and over broken ice, which made the journey very tedious, starting early and arriving late. The habitations in this district, whether peopled or not, are much more comfortable than in the others, and it is but justice to the people to say that they are cleaner and better clothed. On the fifth day I started at one in the morning, and reached sixty miles, the greatest journey I had made in one day, in 35 or 36° of frost. I was obliged from the cold to dismount at least twenty or thirty times to take a run for mere self preservation. At forty miles, or three in the afternoon, we drank tea in a bush, and at eight or nine in the evening reached the station called Malone,—exceedingly fatigued. I soon recovered however, through the kindness of a vener-

able Russian merchant, who happened also to be travelling that way, though nearly eighty years of age, sixty of which he had passed in Siberia, and twenty in Archangel. He gave me tea and a glass of corn spirits, my own having been long since consumed, with every other species of provision. I contrived, however, through the kindness of the people, always to have plenty of fish, which was generally my principal food, in preference to the game which was offered to me, but which I much disliked.

At Malone the track for horses is in general finished, though they do sometimes go as far as Nishney Kolymsk, and even to the Frozen Sea, in search of sea-horse and mammoth's tusks. I was now provided with thirteen dogs and a driver, and a vehicle covered over with a sort of frame and oil cloth, to keep out the cold, too great for me to withstand. A bear skin and warm blanket and pillow were also placed in it, in such a manner that I might lie down, be warm, and sleep at my pleasure. I got in, and it was closed after me, and not a breath of air could enter; so that, notwithstanding the intense cold prevailing on the outside, I was obliged to make my escape from the suffocation within, by taking out my knife and cutting a way through to gain fresh air. I have seldom been so sick or so angry; and pitching the covering into the snow, in this exposed state I resumed the journey. The dogs ran well; but from the effects

of the severe cold, were compelled to rest a few minutes at every four miles, besides at other times, as often as was necessary to let me have my run. Indeed, the want of exercise cruelly affected me. I never was so distressed from the cold: the half hour stages betwixt every three or four miles were sufficient to freeze and fret my face desperately; and it then required no little self-command to be able to resume the exercise so necessary to counteract it. Sometimes I found myself so drowsy, that the driver deemed it necessary to use all his exertions to rouse me. He behaved with great kindness, and has secured my grateful recollection.

We reached fifty-five miles with the same dogs, and put up for the night at a Yukagir hut. Resumed next morning with increased cold, though calm weather, and reached Nishney Kolymsk at noon, amid 42° of frost, according to many spirit thermometers of Baron Wrangel's, on the 31st day of December, 1820, after a most tedious, laborious, and to me perilous journey of sixty-one days, twenty of which were passed in the snow, without even the comfort of a blanket—a great over-sight, I will not call it fault, of my worthy friend Mr. Minitsky: nor had I even a second coat, or parka, nor even a second pair of boots, and less clothing than even the guides and attendants of the poorest class. I could not therefore but feel grateful for my safe arrival at such a season of the year, in such intense cold, and with only the upper part of my

nose between the eyes at all injured. Had I not received the knee preservers I never should have arrived safe, unless by walking the whole distance; for when once the knees are frost bitten in a serious manner, adieu alike to them and life.

I met, at Nishney Kolymsk, the Baron Wrangel, and his companion Mr. Matiushkin, a midshipman. It was the last day of the old year, and in the present enjoyment of a moderate meal, a hearty welcome, and excellent friends, I soon forgot the past, and felt little concern for the future. Quarters were appropriated me in the Baron's own house; and with him, on the shores of the Frozen Sea, I enjoyed health and every comfort I could desire.

CHAPTER VII.

Nishney Kolymsk—Ostrovnaya Fortress—Description of the Fair held there, with the Tchuktchi tribe—Observations on that people, and on Baron Wrangel's Expedition.

On the morning after my arrival at Nishney Kolymsk, and while at breakfast, I received, as a present, a couple of large fish in a frozen state, weighing each five or six poods, or about two hundred pounds weight. I inquired for what they were intended, and learnt, that I could not be supposed to have brought fish with me for subsistence; and that, as the season had already passed for laying in a stock, the inhabitants of course knew that I must be in want. During the forenoon I also received a parka, or leather frock, to be worn during my stay in the Kolyma. It was a handsome one, mounted with sables and martins. To this was added trowsers, cap, boots, and leather hose; in short, every article of dress that could be desired, and sufficient to have served me at least a twelvemonth. Besides these articles, I was provided with a bear's-skin for a bed, and a leather covering for a blanket, lined with hare's skins. Gloves were supplied me through the care of the ladies; and Baron Wrangel, at whose house I lodged, crowned these benevolences,

besides his general kindness, in making my situation absolutely enviable, by fitting me with a complete suit of the dress of the country, to be used if necessary, or retained as a sample of the costume in these northern parts. By those kind and considerate supplies, both of provisions and dress, I was enabled to take my daily exercise with impunity, and could not help recalling to mind the words of Prior, which were fully realized in my case.

> If any nation pass their destined days
> Beneath the neighb'ring sun's directer rays;
> If any suffer, on the Polish coast,
> The rage of Arctos, and eternal frost;
> May not the pleasure of Omnipotence,
> To each of these some secret good dispense?

Baron Wrangel's expedition I found in a state of much forwardness, great exertions having been used in collecting dogs and drivers, and provisions, as well as in making new nartes, or sledges. I learnt that it would depart from the Kolyma in the month of March, in two divisions, one having for its object the solution of the question regarding the latitude and longitude of the north-east cape of Asia; and the other, a journey due north from the Kolyma, in search of a real or supposed continent, or rather the continuation of Asia to where it joined the continent of America. I did not hesitate to volunteer my services; but in consequence of my being a foreigner I found my

services could not be accepted, without special permission from the government. I therefore made up my mind to set out for the country of the Tchuktchi, and to try my fortune in getting a passage through their country, and so to cross over Behring's Straits for America.

During the months of January and February, we were variously employed as the nature of the weather would allow, passing the time agreeably and happily enough. Among other things, I brought up my journal, and worked some observations for the latitudes and longitudes of Nishney Kolymsk. I had also placed at my disposal some interesting volumes which Baron Wrangel had brought with him. Sometimes we joined in the amusements of the natives, and visited them in their feasts, which are very numerous, and at which there is a great consumption of liquor. The ice mountain was of course one of our amusements, and our time was far from hanging heavy. I descended it daily during the fêtes with one and sometimes two young girls, who expressed no fear in trusting themselves with a novice. Our conversation was chiefly relative to the expedition; each person had something to recommend, either for immediate benefit or as a future precaution; among others, I was so fortunate as to propose some things which appeared and proved of service to the expedition, and which were either adopted, or improved upon by the Baron. I have seldom seen

a young man better qualified for the task imposed upon him, or one who possessed a more versatile genius. For his kindness to me I must ever feel grateful, and our short acquaintance has, I trust, been productive of a mutual friendship.

The weather proved exceedingly cold in January and February, but never so severe as to prevent our walks, except during those times when the wind was high: it then became insupportable out of doors, and we were obliged to remain at home. Forty degrees of frost of Fahrenheit never appear to affect us in calm weather so much as ten or fifteen during the time of a breeze; yet to witness the aurora borealis, I have repeatedly quitted my bed in those extremes of cold, without shoes or stockings, and with no dress on but a parka, or frock.

To prove that I do not magnify the extremes of cold in that part of the world, I beg to refer to Mr. Sauer's account of Billing's expedition, and the present Admiral Saritcheff's account of the same, when 43° of Reaumur, or 74° of Farenheit, were repeatedly known. I will, also, add my testimony from experience to the extent of 42°. I have also seen the minute book of a gentleman at Yakutsk where 47° of Reaumur were registered, equal to 84° of Fahrenheit.

Indeed, there can be but little doubt that the local situation of the Kolyma, bordering on the latitude of 70°, and almost the most easterly part of the continent of Asia, is a colder one than

Melville Island or the centre of the American Polar coast. Okotsk, Idgiga, Yakutsk, Tomsk and Tobolsk are considered equally cold and exposed as the mouths of the Lena, Yana, or Kolyma. Even Irkutsk, about the latitude of London, has yearly a frost of 40° of Reaumur, or 58° below the zero of Fahrenheit; yet, the utmost degree of cold that I have observed, I have never known attended by that crackling noise of the breath which has been related, nor with those other strange sensations which some have described; though I have seen axes split to pieces, and witnessed the ill effects of touching iron, glass, or crockery, with the naked skin, which will infallibly adhere to them. However, I soon had reason to consider the coldest day as the finest, because it was then sure to be calm.

Nishney Kolymsk may be termed a large town in this part of the world, containing, as it does, near fifty dwellings and about four hundred people (or eighty families), which is three times the number of any place betwixt it and Yakutsk. It stands on the east side of an island in the Kolyma, about twenty-five miles long, and opposite to the junction of the river Aniuy. Formerly the town was eight miles lower down, but the bleakness of the situation and its consequent exposure to the northern blasts, induced its removal to the present site, where it is protected from them by a range of hills. The island is covered only with low

brush-wood, but receives fine timber which is floated down the river. No cultivation can of course be expected in a climate wherein scarcely a blade of grass is to be seen; the horses which do sometimes tarry in its vicinity for a few days, feed upon the tops, stumps, and bark of the bushes, or upon the moss. The inhabitants manage, notwithstanding, with great labour, to feed a couple of cows; though to do this they are obliged to bring the hay eighty miles. They are mostly Cossacks, with half a dozen pedlers, and three priests, the whole of whom carry on some traffic. These reverend traders seem to have adopted the practice of our young boys, who will say their prayers several times, on those nights when they cannot sleep, as a sort of atonement for those nights when sleep and fatigue, or the like, have superseded them. In like manner the clergymen, as I was told, have actually said masses three times on a certain Sunday, and were then absent till the fourth; and being three brothers, of course they were not in fear of being reported by one another. Baron Wrangel, however acceptable he deemed the extra masses, insisted upon the observance of religious worship every Sunday.

The occupation of people in this part of the world naturally depends upon the season. Laying in wood for fire, hunting, and trading, are the winter occupations, while fishing and fowling are almost the exclusive employment in spring and au-

tumn: summer is generally also the building time. The women embroider gloves, caps, boots, shoes, and various things in a neat manner. Farther on to the southward, they also attend to the breeding of cattle. Fishing may, however, be termed the grand concern, employing as it does, alike, men, women, children and dogs.

The quantity of fish caught is prodigious, as will be inferred from the following account. From Nishney Kolymsk to Malone is a distance of eighty miles; the number of inhabitants in the two places may be six hundred, and these consume nearly two million pounds of fish. Now, allowing one hundred and twenty families to represent the six hundred individuals, it follows that each family receives a portion of about fifteen thousand pounds of fish annually, or forty pounds a day. Nor is such a quantity by any means too large, considering the number of dogs, which are generally allowed each ten herrings a day, at least during the period of work. In the distance above alluded to, there may be about eight hundred dogs, who consume above four thousand pounds of fish daily, during half the year: the other half they prowl about on the banks of the river and lakes, and by their sagacity provide their own subsistence. Indeed, were it not for them, there would inevitably be a plague in the town of Nishney Kolymsk, for there is no filth whatever which is not consumed by them.

The fish caught in the river Kolyma are of various kinds, but most of them I can only denote by their native names, as the nailma, moksou, osioter and sturgeon: the salmon is fine and plentiful, and the sterlett delicious; from the roe of the last is made the black caviar; but herrings are the most abundant of all. The sturgeon is converted into youkola or dried fish, for the inhabitants, while moksou is similarly prepared for the dogs; the other kinds are generally boiled or eaten raw by men and dogs; the former is deemed a most expensive plan. The species of fish allotted to the dogs, are only in cases of great necessity consumed by the men; such for instance was the case between the years 1812 and 1819, when a famine prevailed to so alarming a degree, that the poor were obliged to eat the dogs as they died, although, to their credit be it recorded, they never, even in these circumstances, killed them. Indeed, these faithful animals constitute the greatest part of their riches. Yet nature appears in part to have provided against such emergencies, as it is a general remark, that in those seasons when fish are scarce, elks, wild sheep, and rein deer are most numerous, and *vice versâ*. But many of the inhabitants will not be harassed with the trouble of hunting, and depend entirely upon fish for their food.

Formerly, this part of the world was highly

productive in furs, the emperor receiving a tenth of each sort, which has at times amounted to as many as five thousand sables, but now-a-days less than so many hundreds, a quantity barely sufficient to pay the Yasack. The shores of the Icy Sea are still much frequented by the white, blue, and red fox, and near the woods sables are still to be met with. In the rivers the vidra or river otter is in much estimation. Upon the whole, however, it appears that the inhabitants look to the Tchuktchi for their winter clothing and most valuable fur trade. The animals of the chase seem to have been forced from the central to the extreme parts of Siberia, and thus the elks, rein deer, and argali, or wild sheep, are but rarely met with in the Commissariat; they are now more within the reach of the few Yukagire descendants, who line the banks of the two Aniuys, and chase those animals beyond the frontiers. Game of the feathered kind is nevertheless highly abundant, such as swans, geese, ducks, woodcocks, bustards and partridges; but as in the case of the wild animals, the inhabitants have neither the time nor the means to look after them. Could they be supplied with salt, or could salt works be established here, no spot in the world would be better supplied with food than the Kolyma;—whereas, at present, should they be so fortunate as to take two or three years' fish during one season,

it must all be converted to yukola; and in the second summer it turns sour and becomes magotty, so as scarcely to be fit even for the dogs to eat.

With respect to the salubrity of the town and district of Kolyma, I fear it cannot be highly extolled, being subject to the ravages of many diseases, among which the leprosy, apoplexy, venereal, and scurvy are the most dangerous. The latter alone appears, by the inhabitants, to be susceptible of cure, which is by the consumption of raw fish during the winter: in the summer the disease never fails to abate with the arrival of fresh fish. I always ate of raw fish, as well from choice, as from a wish to conform to the manners and customs of the natives, confident that time and experience must have initiated them into a knowledge of what is best for their climate. The two other diseases before named, especially the venereal, appear incurable, becoming as it were the inheritance of the children. The complaints called *diable au corps*, and imerachism, must also be specified; the former is a most extraordinary one, and consists in an idea that the body of the patient is possessed with one or more devils, attended with incessant hiccoughs. The parties afflicted with it are generally most delicate and interesting in their appearance; and it is seldom indeed that any individual is cured. In females it prevails to such an extent, as utterly to prevent

pregnancy. I have seen them hiccough to so great an extent as to induce me to strike them on the upper part of the spine, in the hope of relieving them from the pain by a surprise of the moment. They persist in believing that a devil is in the body of the person afflicted, and that, until he be removed, the person will never regain health. The complaint, whatever it may be, the natives consider as an inheritance from their fathers. Imerachism, to which not only the people of the Kolyma, but those also of more northern countries are subject, is equally unaccountable. Instead of exciting serious fits, like the last mentioned disorder, it carries with it an air of merriment, as it by no means affects the health of the person, though it subjects him to the most violent paroxysms of rage, fear, and mortification. Whatever is said or done in the presence of an imerach will be repeated by him at the moment, however indecorous or improper the act may be. I have seen the dog-master of Baron Wrangel's expedition commit acts sufficient to frighten the person in company with him. While in an adjoining room conversing on points of duty, a slight knock at the bulk-head was sufficient to set him a pummelling the person with him, merely from a principle of self defence. Of this same dog-master, by the way, a highly amusing anecdote is related, and which was confirmed to me, not only by himself personally, but also by Mr. Gedenstrom of Irkutsk,

who commanded the expedition. The theatre was the frozen ocean, and the imerach's dogs and narte were the headmost. One forenoon they encountered a large white bear; the dogs immediately started towards the animal, and the driver, being the dog-master of whom I am speaking, stedfastly kept his place, prudently remaining by those who only could assist him. In the eagerness of the dogs, sharpened probably by hunger, they became entangled with one another, and were almost rendered useless. The driver seeing the state to which he was reduced, resolved to attack the bear with his ostol (a stout ironed stick with small bells, which serves to stop the narte), and accordingly presented himself to the enraged bear, who immediately raised himself upon the hind legs, and began to cry and roar most bitterly; the imerach followed the example. The bear then began to dance, and the driver did the same, till at length the other nartes coming up, the bear received a blow upon the nose and was secured. It appears that the nose is the only part vulnerable without fire-arms, and even then, they can be secured only on being shot through the head. The white bears are, however, by no means a dangerous animal, avoiding the chase as much as they are avoided.—Another instance of imerachism which occurred in a distant part of the general government of Siberia, may be related in this place, to prevent again adverting to those ludi-

crous scenes which hourly attend it. Two oldladies in Kamtchatka, one, the mother of a Mr. Tallman, an American, who had married a Russian girl, the other, the wife of a Russian, who were both afflicted with the disease, were sitting at tea opposite to one another, when Mr. Tallman, in a gentle manner, put his hands behind their backs, propelling the old ladies towards each other, upon which they instantly exchanged tea-cups and saucers, while the really offending party stood enjoying the mischief. There can be no doubt that the complaint is rendered worse by the constant annoyance and irritation to which they are subjected for the amusement of others.

Nishney Kolymsk has formerly been celebrated by the rank of the people banished thither. The famous Count Golofkin, one of the ministers of Catherine II. was for many years a resident, and ultimately died there. He was considered as a great intriguant, but of an eccentric character, a proof of which is afforded by his constant habit of putting himself, servants, and even his house into mourning, on Catherine's birth, name, or coronation day. This open and determined opposition utterly precluded his pardon, and Nishney Kolymsk contains his tomb. The conduct of a Livonian Baron, at one time high in the esteem of the same princess, merited and obtained more favourable consideration. The baron successfully applied himself to

the breeding of cattle, in the vicinity of Sredne Kolymsk, but his pardon arrived so late, that his age and infirmities prevented his acceptance of the proffered boon, and he, his wife, and two children, lie buried in the church at Kolymsk; his eldest son returned to St. Petersburg, and became re-possessed of the honours and wealth of his father. To such men an expatriation to this, the most distant part of Russian Siberia, must have been severe beyond measure; cut off for ever from fortune, friends, rank, society, and every enjoyment that could render life desirable.

The only meteorological phenomena which occurred during my stay at the Kolyma, was the aurora borealis. The scene fell far short of my expectations. I understood however, that the months of October and November are the most proper to view them in their greatest splendour. Those which appeared during my stay, were generally from the north, and consisted of columns of fire moving in an horizontal direction, and generally disappearing in the south-west; the height of the columns being from 50° to 60°. At times an immense illuminated space from north to east, would advance very close to us, and throwing up rays, or rockets of fire, and, forming into concave arches, approached us so near, as apparently to endanger our situation, exhibiting at the same time every colour of the rainbow. The most beautiful aurora which I saw was

at midnight of the first of March; the wind was from the north-north-west, and the glass at 36° of cold. The aurora occupied the whole circle of the heavens, at an elevation of 28° or 30°, and gradually rising, disappeared in the zenith. The figure was as an illuminated tent, with festoons, or fringes at the lower part, and which had an appearance as if constantly receiving accessions of fire, which were equally distributed to it from every part of the foundation of the tent. The illuminated part gradually diminished in splendor as it approached the zenith. It lasted about two hours, and did a little affect the electrometer. The view of it was rendered exceedingly fine and interesting, from the fact of our situation being as it were in the inside of the tent.

Among the books in our library was Captain Burney's Chronological History of the North Eastern discoveries of the Early Navigation of the Russians. It appeared to me so extraordinary a production, and so deserving reply, that I addressed a memorial or letter to that effect to the Royal Society. Whether that learned body have received it or not I am unacquainted, at least in an official manner. I shall not, however, trouble my readers with a copy of it, because the person who occasioned it has paid the debt of nature. As connected with this journey, I had certainly considered it becoming the attention of the Royal Society, because the Me-

morial was professedly addressed to that body, and was only not received from a want of form. Mine was also equally faulty, and consequently could expect no better reception, being addressed, not to the *President and Secretary*, but to the *Secretary and President* of the Society.

Baron Wrangel and his party leaving us on the 27th of February, I attended him ten miles down the river, when I wished him every success, and returned.

On the 4th of March I left the Kolyma, in company with Mr. Matiushkin, midshipman, and a few merchants, whose nartes were loaded with tobacco and iron utensils. The weather was fine, being but 25° below frost; yet we had not got more than fifteen miles, before we were obliged to halt, on the banks of a lake, being unable to make out the path from the depth of snow. Our route lay on the Aniuy, having left to the north the high lands which defend the town of Nishney Kolymsk. I passed the night very tolerably in the snow; but it was otherwise with my friend, who as yet had not experienced the inconveniences of these nocturnal sojournings, and of course was not initiated into the mysteries of the comforts to be secured by precautionary measures. The following day we passed through a thick forest of pines, in the greatest danger of broken heads, going with a velocity almost incredible, and at every descent of a hill dashing up

against the trees. Thirteen dogs were provided for me. We made thirty-five miles in this manner, and reached the little Aniuy, a considerable, rapid, and dangerous river. A charity yourte received us for the night, and we fared very well. The low lands, which extend from the Kolyma to the eastward, being now passed, we entered upon a more elevated country, and were cheered with meeting and overtaking a great number of sledges, whose owners exhibited the same smiling faces, the result no doubt of as sanguine hopes, as those of the great merchants of London or Amsterdam, on the eve or expectation of a great fair. The right bank of the little Aniuy is formed of slate mountains; the left a vast uninteresting flat. The river, which has many islands in it, winds a good deal, and exhibits some good scenery.

The descendants of the Yukagiri inhabit the banks of the two rivers Aniuy, and serve as a sort of neutral nation between the Russians and Tchuktchi. They were formerly a formidable and warlike people; and it cost the Russians much trouble to subjugate them. Indeed, in such fear were they held, that the Empress Catherine absolutely forbade their language to be spoken. They are now all but extinct, as a pure race, but one old woman existing whose parents were both Yukagires. The remainder are in fact descendants of Russians, who have intermarried with them.

They are certainly the finest race of people I have seen in Siberia; the men well proportioned, and with open and manly countenances; the women are extremely beautiful. What their origin was, it is now difficult to say.

The third day we reached an inhabited yourte, where many of the merchants awaited us, as they could not go to the fair before a certain time. The river was also in some degree an impediment to their proceeding, as the velocity of the stream prevents firm ice being ever formed. Two of the merchants, in attempting the passage, got a severe ducking, and narrowly escaped with their lives: the breadth of the path being but five or six feet, and so slippery in some places, that unless the driver be very well qualified and accustomed to the place, it is difficult to prevent accidents. The wood on the Aniuy is of considerable growth, for so northern a situation; but the root has seldom more than twenty inches depth.

I witnessed, for the second time, the first being at Sordak, the mock suns and moons, and columns on each side of them, at equal distances; but these parhelia were by no means brilliant, owing, as it appeared to me, to the rather warm weather; I shall, therefore, await more favourable appearances, before I attempt their description.

On the 8th of March we reached the Fortress,

the river bordered with the same elevated high slate lands on the right, and low flat on the left bank. At seven miles, on this side the fortress, the scenery begins to improve; and the fortress itself may be said to be a most romantic spot. It is distant from the Kolyma one hundred and fifty miles. During summer the place must be very pleasant. There are twenty yourtes, about two hundred people, and a large wooden building, fit for any thing except defence. The whole stands upon an island, surrounded by elevated and well wooded hills. There is very little grass, but much moss. The view of the river is exceedingly picturesque; and the fortress is decidedly the most favourable place to reside in I have seen from Yakutsk, a distance of near two thousand miles.

The inhabitants on the banks of the river are not numerous, and subsist very scantily by hunting, there being few fish in the river. Famines are therefore of frequent occurrence, bread not being supplied by the government. Elks, rein-deer, and argali, are what the people most depend upon; formerly they were abundant, but are now much reduced, owing to the peopling of the country by the Russians, who hunt rather to exterminate the breed than to procure subsistence. During the fair, the inhabitants make the best of their time in trading and becoming a sort of store-keepers to the traders.

Having settled ourselves in a small Yukagir yourte, Mr. Matiushkin and I received a visit from one of the Tchuktchi, a most empty countenanced and wild looking savage. He entered the room where we were, tumbled himself down upon a stool, smoked his pipe, and then quitted the room, without once looking at, or taking the least notice either of us, or any thing about us. The commissary having made his appearance, it was determined to commence the fair, by first installing two of the chiefs with medals and swords, baptizing them, and receiving a nominal tribute. The morning was ushered in by the arrival of these persons in state, dressed in their gayest apparel, and seated in a beautiful narte, drawn by two rein-deer, the whole forming a cavalcade of twenty-five or thirty pairs. Having reached a large store-house, to which the altar and images were carried, the priest proceeded to baptize the two men, their wives, and three children; but instead of being merely sprinkled with water, they, men and women, were obliged one and all to strip, and to be three times plunged in a large iron cauldron of ice-water, with the thermometer on the spot at 35° of Reaumur, with no part of the dress on except their trowsers; and were afterwards directed to bathe their feet in the same cold water. I could not help pitying the women and children, the former of whom having long hair, became, as it were, enveloped in icicles. A small cross sus-

pended round the neck completed the ceremony. A quantity of tobacco was then given as a present to each of the new converts, by way of inducing others to follow the example. Instances having, however, occurred of late of Tchuktchi being twice baptized, and even of presenting themselves a third time, for the privilege of the presents, the good people of Irkutsk begin to be tired of sending either their missionaries or tobacco to such a people.

The ceremony finished, the same cavalcade joined by the other chiefs, or Toions of the Tchuktchi, proceeded to the abode of the commissary, whither Mr. Matiushkin and I followed. The commissary then made the usual declaration, that the fair could not begin until he had received a tribute for the Emperor Alexander, on which the principal traders advanced and laid each a red fox skin at the feet of the commissary. The names of the donors, and the value of the skins were then regularly entered in the official records, and the commissary proceeded to invest two of the chiefs with a medal and small sabre, reading to them publicly a letter, which he is supposed to receive from the chief of Yakutsk, declaring it to be the Emperor's order so to invest the chief, or Toion ; the clergyman then advanced to give his benediction to them, and the poor ignorants became quite happy, quite proud, and ultimately quite drunk.

The next topic started was that of my desire to

accompany the Tchuktchi through their country, and this seemed to require more generalship than all the others. The Commissary, through an interpreter, commenced by informing the Tchuktchi people, that, "the Emperor understanding two strange ships had appeared upon their coast, was willing to know who they were, and had accordingly sent with them, agreeable to their request, two interpreters, one of whom understood their own language as well as the Russian, while the other, meaning myself, understood the languages of most maritime nations. The Commissary desired, as from the Emperor, that all due care should be taken of, and all due respect paid to us, especially to myself, who was one of the chief interpreters of the empire." After this opening harangue was completed, the turn of which inspired me with some degree of hope, one of the most respectable of the Tchuktchi, got up and said, that "he was in want of no interpreter, and therefore would not take one." This laconic reply completely disconcerted us. The next an old and cunning fellow, called Kacharga, said "that boys and girls should not be attended to in a case of such importance; that he, a chief, had not demanded an interpreter, although a nephew of his had done so." He expatiated upon the impropriety of taking from those youths a communication of such importance, as should alone have come from a chief. I could not but approve the justice of the remark, and began to suspect the

whole was a hoax, and that they had not made any demand of an interpreter. It was therefore told them that "two nartes would be of no great consequence to them, and that as the Emperor had so sent, they ought to take us, for that we dared not return to merit his displeasure." A fresh consultation was hereupon held by the savages, and they came to a determination, "that as the great Emperor *himself wished* to send two interpreters to Behring's Straits, of course he could have no objection to pay for the transport of such people." Upon inquiring what demand they would make, they said "fifty bags of tobacco," a quantity equalling one hundred and twenty poods, or near five thousand pounds weight. To make such a present in advance, was madness in me to think of, and the project appeared, as indeed it proved, to be wholly lost, for they added, that "he could be no great Emperor who could not make so small a present, seeing that he could command the riches of all his people." They also observed that "I must be a poor interpreter if I could not satisfy the demand myself."—Alas! they might as well have demanded five millions as five thousand pounds of me. One of the knowing ones observed, and I mention it as evincing the sagacity of those people, that "he doubted whether I was an interpreter of the great Emperor's," saying, that I "could not even speak the Russian language, for that he noticed the Russian Cossack interpreted from the Tchuk-

skoi to Mr. Matiushkin, and Mr. M. again in a different dialect to me." All this was too true to be denied. They then asked, "of what use I could possibly be to them, when I neither understood the Russian nor Tchukskoi languages." This last truism quite appalled the whole of us, and from that moment the point was given up. It was not a little singular that these rude people should all along have known that a third Toion, or Chief, for I was considered as one, was in the fair, and demanded who and what he was. I have, however, no idea that their refusal arose either from fear or ill will, but simply from avarice.

I next day visited their camp, distant about two miles and a half. It consisted of three large and three small tents. The former contained the bulk of the Tchukskoi people, and the latter were appropriated to the chiefs and more considerable people. The large tents were disgustingly dirty and offensive, exhibiting every species of grossness and indelicacy. But the smaller were, on the contrary, very neat, clean, and warm, although without a fire, in 35° of frost. Indeed they were to me almost suffocating, being only eight feet long, five broad, and about three feet high; and containing three or four people huddled together in one bed, which is made of rein-deer skins, and the coverings lined with white-foxes. The small tents are made also of the old and hard skins doubled, so that the hair is both on the inside and out; a large lamp with

whale oil or fat, which serves them for a light, communicates also considerable warmth. On entering one of their dwellings, I found the chief and his wife perfectly naked, as was also a little girl their daughter, of about nine years old,—nor did they seem to regard our presence (Mr. Matiushkin was with me), but ordered the daughter to proceed and prepare some rein-deer's meat for us; which she did, in that state of nudity, by a fire close to the tent. Having lolled upon the bed about a quarter of an hour, we were treated with the rein-deer meat half boiled, of which we of course partook out of compliment. I was, however, obliged to cut short my visit from want of air, and the most offensive smell I had ever endured for so long a time. The Toion, or Chief, was a little angry with me for quitting him, and imputed it to his having the previous day opposed my design of going through his country. Their furniture consists of a large kettle, knife, wooden bowls, platters, spoons or ladles; and an axe—with flint and steel. Having thus informed myself of the savage state in which they live, I returned to the fortress, driven by one of the chiefs in a neat narte, drawn by a couple of rein-deer in a pretty style. They use regular reins, made of leather thongs, and a long springing cane with an ivory nob to it, of the tooth of a sea-horse; the latter is exercised occasionally upon the rump of the animal, on which it is capable of inflicting a pretty severe blow. I must however do justice to

the Tchuktchi in their very kind treatment and conduct to their brutes, whether dogs or rein-deer —-appearing quite to consider them as pets. Nay to so great a degree is this feeling carried, that among this savage nation it is considered unmanly even to ride a horse: in all ordinary cases they prefer to walk, and in every other way appear solicitous to lessen the labour of the animal.

On our return to the fortress, the fair was formally commenced by an harangue of the Commissary's, declaring the terms, the tax, and the penalties. The Tchuktchi had in the mean time ascertained the quantity of tobacco in the market by means of their emissaries, who are exceedingly inquisitive and cunning upon that point, their rudeness and apparent equality giving them free access to every dwelling which contains any of that commodity. They have their own mode of calculating, and before the fair is commenced, they fix the price of their goods, to which price they adhere more strictly than the Russians. The fair is held upon the river Aniuy, opposite to the fortress. Early in the morning the Tchuktchi arrive at the place of barter, and forming a semi-circle towards the fortress, the extremes of which reach to the edge of the ice, dispose their furs upon their nartes, the owners constantly remaining by them. In the mean time the Russians place their large bags or bales of tobacco in the centre of the semi-circle, and then begin to parade and visit the Tchuktchi,

enquiring the prices, &c. by means of an interpreter. The work entirely falls upon the Russian, who drags behind him for many hours, two hundred weight of tobacco, before he can induce the Tchuktchi to barter. The tobacco on the first or second day cannot be exchanged below the terms of an agreement made between the merchants, as three or four people are so posted, as to ascertain and judge of the conditions and their validity. Still, however, they do manage to cheat; but on discovery, the goods are forfeited, and the parties declared incompetent to trade any more. They are particularly guarded by the law as to the wetting of tobacco, or placing stones or other heavy things with it, to increase the weight.

It is ludicrous enough to stand upon the banks of the river, and wait the appointed signal for commencing barter each morning. While the Tchuktchi are quietly sitting on their nartes, with their sleeves drawn back, and their arms thrust into their bosoms to keep them warm, the Russians, on the contrary, start pell-mell: pots, pans, kettles, knives, swords, hatchets, scissars, needles, &c. are rattling in every direction, like so many chimney sweepers on May-day; priests, officers, Cossacks and merchants, men, women and children, alike fantastically dressed with articles of traffic, of which tobacco constituted the chief. A few bells, pipes, and corals also, served to grace the dresses of the more wealthy and whimsical pedlers. For all the small articles the Russians

readily enough received fresh meat, which was much wanted. The heavier skins and sea-horse teeth also were ready for sale by the Tchuktchi at a reduced price; but the inducement which the Tchuktchi have to sell bears, wolves, and rein-deer skins, namely, their weight, and the expense of transporting them, operate to prevent the Russians from buying them. Sea-horse teeth were particularly flush on the first day, but nothing would do, the tax and penalty were feared, and little business was done. No instance occurred of the Tchuktchi selling below the rule, but two Russians, brothers, were detected in it and committed to prison until the close of the fair. The price or rate which the Russians had set, was a martin park, somewhat like a carter's frock, of twenty skins, and fifteen red foxes for a hundred weight of tobacco; while the Tchuktchi held it at a park and ten red foxes. The second day was brisker and more business was done; from fifteen red foxes and a park of martins, the Russians descended, by general consent, to twelve and eleven foxes. Still the Tchuktchi generally held on, compelling the Russians, meantime, to walk about making offers. What, however, with cunning, and breaking off the agreement, a good deal of business was done; but the third and last day's fair was the best and most lucrative for the savages, when neither tax, nor penalty, nor perjury, were feared; each individual, from the Commissary to his secretary and priest, and from the Cossacks to the merchants, all busily employed in undermining his neighbour. I

could scarcely believe that in so small a number of individuals there could exist so great and general jealousy, but so it was, and many quarrels ensued.

I never saw better judges of tobacco, nor of weight, than the Tchuktchi. I can confidently assert that they do not err one pound in the hundred weight; and the detection of the slightest fraud on the part of the Russians is sufficient to the Tchuktchi to cut the party short, and deal no more with him. Their mode of trying the strength of tobacco is this: a leaf of it is taken and squeezed in the hand as hard as possible, and if any appearance of moisture be left in the palm, it is well known that the tobacco has been watered; if the leaf preserve the compressed shape which the force of the hand has given it, it is weak, but if it recover and expand quickly to its original size and shape the tobacco is deemed strong. And such is their nicety of judgement in ascertaining this point, that an allowance of goods is given or received on the celerity with which the leaf returns, after compression, to its natural shape.

The last day's sale, although of course the best, was held back a little by the Tchuktchi wishing to make the Russians believe that they had no want of tobacco, as they could get it much cheaper in the bay of St. Lawrence, from the ships which casually call there. Whatever trade they may carry on with those vessels, the Tchuktchi appear to know the value of a more direct and first-

hand trade; nor can this be doubtful, when the toils and dangers of their journey and the small profits are considered. The fair lasted seven days which is three more than usual, the two first and the two last, may, however, be considered as nothing, being occupied in the lowest species of *retail*, in which deliveries are made so low as for sixpence or ninepence. Upon the last day of the real fair or fifth from the commencement, the vodka (spirit) began to make its appearance, and its effects were successful in inducing the Tchuktchi to bring forward, for sale, the black and brown foxes. They sold however very dear, and were nearly all taken back with them to their country.

The trade of the Commissary, secretary, their friends, and Cossacks, was done to so great an extent, and with so little principle, that the licensed trader could do nothing, except at a considerable loss. The former have a wonderful advantage also, in bringing their goods into the market, from being able to make padvodies, or public levies of dogs, &c. as if for the public service. This however cannot rank among those abuses laid to the charge of the Emperor; for, if the offenders' salaries were increased tenfold, the same practice would be continued: they would still trade, and still act, in the same unfeeling way. "A want of education, or avarice, begets a want of morality."* Baron Wran-

* Auri sacra fames! quæ non mortalia cogis
Pectora! —

gel has done all he can to remedy this evil, but, the moment he retires from the scene, the same conduct will be resorted to, forming as it does, a considerable revenue to those holding the command. All extra services of the crown, as those for the post, expresses, forwarding of the bread, spirits, and public stores, are thrown upon the poor, while priests nobility, all officers of the crown, and Cossacks, who possess the best means of carrying such services into execution, are exempt. The poor, having no dogs, are obliged to hire them at exorbitant rates from the rich. Every narte taken for the use of the public during the fair is a loss to the poor of sixty roubles, or near three pounds. The number of nartes which have been thus at certain times required, may be conjectured from the fact that while I was there, the Commissary demanded one for himself, others for his secretary, servant, Cossack, and chancellary; and a sixth for his provisions. The chief priest also demanded severally for himself, assistant, Cossack, altar, baggage and provisions. The object of the former was to register the receipt of twenty-three red foxes, being the yasack paid by the Tchuktchi; that of the latter, the christening and registering of seven savages, and all the provisions they carried could not have exceeded forty pounds weight; consequently there could have been no necessity for such padvodies. I am one of the last persons to discountenance, in the least degree, the general design of

converting to Christianity the savage tribes dispersed over various parts of the world, but I think it must be regretted that such project should ever have the effect of straitening or burthening those who are born Christians. As to the present case it is to be hoped the liberality of the government will extend to this distant and impoverished place, by paying the inhabitants for all services performed for the crown. This would possibly prevent much abuse, and at least have the effect of disbursing a sum of money, of little consideration to a government, though highly acceptable to the governed.

The fair at length finished, I prepared to depart for Nishney Kolymsk, with many thanks to my venerable Yukagir host for all his kindness. I passed the time very agreeably at his house; he was a very good chess player, and was fond of the game. His manner of play added another instance to many I have witnessed, that there is, in various parts of the world, little or no difference any where in the moving of the pieces. I have played the game with Yakuti, Tongousi, and Yukagiri; but the Tchuktchi laughed at me for such a childish employment of my time. While upon this subject, I may remark as a circumstance relative to this people, which has repeatedly surprised me, that wherever a people recognize and play the game, they are infallibly Asiatics. Neither the Tchuktchi nor the Koriaks understand any thing of it, but all the Kamtchatdales are familiar with it.

The features of the Yukagiri lead me to suppose them Tartars, and not a race very distinct from the Yakuti. They are, however, almost Russified by intermarriages, and the question of their origin is become difficult. There were at the fair two or three of the Chuanse, or Chodynse, a tributary nation, inhabiting the country between the two Aniuies and the Anadyr: their features are Asiatic.

The information I received from the Tchuktchi by means of the interpreter Kobeleff, son to the Kobeleff who attended the expedition under Captain Billings, I will give in the same laconic style in which I communicated it to the Governor-general of Siberia from Nishney Kolymsk. My letter in the first part, described what articles were sold by the Russians; as, tobacco, kettles, knives, spears, needles, bells, scissars, pipes, axes, spoons, coral beads, and other small ornaments, a few pieces of red and blue nankeen, and white cotton. For these the Tchuktchi brought four or five hundred sea-horse teeth, a few bear's-skins, rein-deer dresses, and white foxes, and these with some frozen rein-deer meat, make the whole productions of their own country. The other articles of fur come from a nation on the American continent, called the Kargaules; two of whom were at the fair. They bear more nearly the features of the Tchuktchi than those of the hideous-mouthed inhabitants of the islands in Behring's Straits, although with a browner or more dirty colour. The furs brought and sent by them

consist of many thousands of black, brown, blue, red, and white foxes, martins, and martin parks, some beavers, river otters, bears, wolves, sea-dogs, and sea-horse skins; a few articles of warm clothing, and some ornaments carved out of sea-horse teeth, representing the animals common among them.

The value of the exports on the spot, taking them at four hundred bags, or forty thousand pounds weight of tobacco, at three roubles a pound, is one hundred and twenty thousand roubles; to this add sixty thousand for the value of the other articles, and we shall make the exports amount to about one hundred and eighty thousand roubles, or seven thousand guineas. The value of those articles at Yakutsk, as purchased by the traders, is not *one-third*, leaving, after the deducting of carriage expenses, which are considerable, a clear profit of about one hundred or one hundred and twenty per cent., and would be much more, but that so many people trade against each other, and that the traders are altogether too numerous. The market is overstocked with tobacco, not one half being disposed of. The value of the imports may be known by reference to the tax, recollecting that the furs bear almost the same price at Yakutsk as at the Kolymsk, although distant nearly two thousand miles, by land; the return of the horses, however, enable the merchants to go back cheap.

A bag of tobacco of one hundred pounds weight

is worth three hundred roubles, and iron work of fifty or sixty roubles value is exchanged for a martin park, worth ninety and one hundred roubles; fifteen red foxes, two hundred and fifty to three hundred roubles; and a pair of boots and park of rein-deer skin, worth about forty or fifty roubles; making altogether about four hundred roubles, which brings the exchange on the spot, as nearly as can be, equal, for the tax is not adhered to. Now if one bag of tobacco produce four hundred, four hundred bags will be equal to one hundred and sixty thousand roubles, which constitutes the imports, being the same value as at Yakutsk. The merchants have also the benefit of a great trade on their journey along the rivers, with the Yakuti; and this is really the most advantageous branch of it, for they will extort even three and four hundred per cent.

The Tchuktchi parted with less than a third of their most valuable furs, taking the rest back. I inferred hence, that they have not the means of conveyance for more than four hundred bags of tobacco, and the other articles sold with these; otherwise from their love of that article, and the demand for it by the American savages, they would no doubt purchase it for the small and valuable furs. Indeed the demand for this commodity is so great, that at the Anadyrsk and Idgiginsk fairs the Russians do not give in barter with the Tchuktchi one half of the quantity which is given at Kolymsk,

and consequently the Anadyr Tchuktchi are prohibited by the rest of their nation from trading to the Kolymsk, for fear of spoiling the market.

There were this year at the fair, which is termed a good one, two hundred and fifty nartes, and five hundred rein-deer, with sixty-eight men, sixty women, and fifty-six children. Each rein-deer can draw three and four poods, or one hundred and fifty pounds weight. Those which come to the fair return only to the river Tchaon, where they are exchanged for those which belong to, and which had come from the Bay of St. Lawrence. Seventy-five and ninety days are required for them to perform the journey, which is about eight hundred versts, or five hundred miles.

There were three chiefs at the fair: first, Yebrashka, who commands the tribes inhabiting the banks of the Tchaon, Packla, and Kvata rivers, as well as the country towards Shelatskoi Noss. Second, Valetka, chief of the Belo Morsky Tchuktchi, which tribe inhabit the eastern sea coast, from Cape North to the Bay of Klasheui. Third, Kacharga, who commands the Tchukskoi Noss, or East Cape tribe, who inhabit the Noss, and the country from thence to the Bay of St. Lawrence. The first are wanderers, and live by their rein-deer, which are employed for burthen between the river Tchaon and the fair, and in the trade of sea-horse teeth. The second subsist almost entirely by fishing and hunting, added to a small tribute, or toll of tobac-

co, which is paid by their southern neighbours for a free passage along their coast; they have no rein-deer. The third tribe subsist by traffic, and the breeding of rein-deer, of which they have considerable herds, and are employed from the Bay of St. Lawrence to the banks of the Tchaon. There is also a fourth chief who commands the Tchuktchi of Anadyr Noss, a tribe who inhabit the country and banks of the Anadyr, and also subsist by traffic and the breeding of rein-deer. These chiefs live equally distant from each other about one hundred and fifty or two hundred miles, and carry on a sort of intercourse by means of the eastern coast Tchuktchi, who are provided with baidares.

The Tchukskoi Noss race are the most numerous; those of the eastern coast the most warlike and hardy; the Tchaon, or Shelatskoi are the most friendly, and those on the Anadyr Noss are the richest. The whole are nominally independent, but actually tributary; for the Yasack though small, is enforced and conscientiously paid. Their existence as an independent tribe hangs on the will of Russia, for that independence will at any time be sacrificed to retain their trade. Their whole number cannot exceed four or five thousand. The Kargoules are represented by them as far more numerous, but the Tchuktchi cannot count past a hundred, or ten tens, that is, their fingers ten times over. Each tribe has a different dialect of the same language, and all understand one another, though

the dialects are extremely difficult to articulate; so much so, that the interpreters, after the three days of the fair, are generally laid up with a sore throat.

In the conversations I had with the Toions or Chiefs (the same word used in America, and in the same sense), I understood them to have no knowledge nor tradition of any land north of theirs; that the sea is for ten months so frozen, that nothing but mountains of ice are visible; that during the months of August and September the ice breaks up, but not in such a manner as to admit a passage for vessels. They told me also that large herds of rein deer roam from cape to cape, but do not come from the north beyond the sea. To the west of Shelatskoi Noss, termed by them Erree, is a large and very deep bay, into which the Packla and Tchaon discharge their waters; and in this bay two islands, the one called Ayon, small and near the Noss, abounding in sea-horse teeth, the other Illeree, large, and producing fine moss for the rein deer. The latter has some few residents both in winter and summer; in the former season catching and killing wild rein-deer for the fair, in the latter feeding the tame rein-deer; I was told that half way across the south side of the bay, there is a high mountain of rock. That from their habitations on the Tchaon and Packla rivers to Shelatskoi Noss it is only *one* day's journey with rein-deer, a pair of which are represent-

ed by them as capable, upon an emergency, and in hard frosty weather, of drawing a sledge with one person fifty or sixty miles. Shelatskoi Noss does not, by their report, run far into the sea, but is elevated, and has a narrow passage between it and their country, in truth an isthmus, which forms a small bay, without islands, to the east of the Noss. I was also made to understand, that the coast from the bay on the east of the Noss, trends a little to the right of the rising sun. The Noss is formed by the Tchaon and Packla rivers on the west, and the Kvata and Ekakta on the east, and the Tchaon bay, by Shelatskoi Noss and the island of Illeree. The Pogitcha river is represented as not the same with the Anadyr, but a small yet rapid stream which from the east enters the Tchaon. And lastly, that the whole of their country is so mountainous, so barren, and so deep in snow, that laden rein deer cannot come straight from the Bay of St. Lawrence, but are obliged to coast along the valleys on the shore, until they reach the Packla, where their route changes from NW. to SW.

Fish is said to abound in the northern rivers, on the eastern coast, as well as in the Bay of St. Lawrence, which last is the only place where ships can anchor, and is formed by the Tchutskoi and Anadyrskoi Nosses. They have no knowledge nor tradition of any nation called the Shelages, but they recognize the word kopai, as applicable to the name of a person in their language. They know nothing

either of their origin or first settlement in the country, nor of the Tartar nations subject to Russia, nor do they understand any Tartar words. Their language bears no affinity to the Asiatic, though it is understood by the Koriaks. The features of the Tchuktchi, their manners and customs, pronounce them of American origin, of which the shaving of their heads, puncturing of their bodies, wearing large ear-rings, their independent and swaggering way of walking, their dress, and superstitious ideas, are also evident proofs: nor is it less than probable that the Esquimaux, and other tribes of Arctic Americans may have decended from them, for several words of their languages are alike, and their dress perfectly similar. That New Siberia has been inhabited there is no doubt; many huts or yourtes still existing, and there are traditions in Siberia, of tribes having been compelled from persecution, as well as from disease, to quit their lands or those beyond the seas. The persons of the Tchuktchi are not peculiarly large, though their dress, which is clean but of enormous size, gives them almost a gigantic appearance. They have fair or clear skins, but ordinary though masculine features. In conduct they are wild and rude. They have no diseases, and live to a great age; two of the chiefs at the fair being past seventy, as calculated by the number of voyages they had made ere they accompanied Captain Billings. I did not find them idolatrously fond of spirits, as

they refused to change furs for that alone, though they would readily receive it, and in preference bargain with the donors. They appeared a bold, suspicious and irascible people, and though very avaricious, perfectly honest, and not inhospitable. They appear to trust to their nominal independence to conceal their actual weakness, and magnify their numerical strength. They have a respect for their chiefs, and do not live in that perfect state of equality which has been supposed, though they purposely affect that equality in the presence of the Russians; when the most common of their nation will enter a Russian dwelling, behave rude and churlish, keep his cap on, take what he wants without asking, and ultimately quit without the slightest thanks, acknowledgement, or appearance of feeling. The chiefs on the contrary are extremely correct in all that concerns their conduct with the Russians, sitting with their caps off, asking for what they want, and making themselves by no means unacceptable guests.

The whole of them are ingenious, cunning, industrious and excellent mechanics, which is proved by the symmetry, neatness and quantity of their nartes, clothes, tents, arms, and ornaments. They have no religion, but a sort of regard to some sorcerers or people held by them in veneration. They are allowed to retain five wives, whom they may put to death upon discovery of any criminal intercourse; holding also the power of compelling

them to such criminal intercourse, an act by no means unfrequent, when the husband is in want of an heir or son.

Upon the whole, the Tchuktchi appear to be approaching to Russian subjection; and I am confident they would never object to a traveller or travellers exploring their inhospitable country, provided they received a remuneration; and nothing prevented my being able to accompany them, save their avarice and my poverty. I felt, however, happy in establishing the fact of being permitted to go on some terms, because it will enable the Russian government to take the first opportunity of exploring their country. Yet I would advise such as are employed to be particular in their conduct; they will have to do with a people jealous and suspicious, but who, although cautious in giving their word, are truly faithful in keeping it. He who shall feel inclined to accompany such a savage race through their inhospitable and uninteresting country, must doubtless be prepared to undergo very great fatigues and privations; he should be inured to cold, as he will, doubtless have to walk the whole distance, and on no day exceeding four or five miles. He should also be tall, stout, and strong, for such and such only the Tchuktchi both fear and obey.

The manner of dressing their food, is by boiling when wood can be procured, which, however, is not frequently the case during the winter season. They then generally consume frozen meat

or fish, which with them, as with the others in rein-deer countries, is considered a necessary and extravagant luxury: warm and raw marrow is also their greatest delicacy. The flavour of their meat is most exquisite; free from that soft and flabby taste, common to rein-deer and veal, with a flavour somewhat between beef and mutton, more tender than the one and less so than the other. They drink tea, and are exceedingly fond of sugar. Tobacco is their great commodity, which they eat, chew, smoke, and snuff at the same time. I have seen boys and girls of nine or ten years of age put a large leaf of tobacco into their mouths, without permitting any saliva to escape; nor will they put aside the tobacco should meat be offered to them, but continue consuming both together. They are said, no doubt, correctly, to drink only snow water during the winter: to melt which when no wood is to be had, very disgusting and dirty means are resorted to. Nothing is so acceptable to a rein-deer as human urine, and I have seen them even run to get it, as occasion offered. In closing the account of this strange people I may mention one remarkable circumstance: a kettle or cooking utensil is in their language called cookee, but whether the word proceeds, as I conjecture, from the remembrance of the name of Captain Cook, who first supplied them with that utensil, or from the English word denoting the use it is applied to, I admit to be a question. To these vessels which are of iron, they are much attached, and the

stronger and stouter they are, the better; nor will any consideration induce them to take or purchase a copper vessel, although lined with tin, as they consider it poisonous. Plain raw iron are preferred, and these they will fearlessly and with impunity handle in a temperature of forty degrees of frost.

My return to the Kolyma occupied me only two days, partly from lightness of carriage, and partly from the hunger of the dogs, there being little or none of their common food offering for sale on the banks of the Aniuy. I was most happy to meet with the Baron Wrangel, who had returned from his expedition round Shelatskoi Noss; I received from him the following account. He was absent a month upon the whole, and followed the course laid down in the chart of reference, which proves that the information I had derived from the Tchuktchi was perfectly correct; as well as the contents of my memorial to the Royal Society, which the Baron had previously read. A bay exists to the east of Shelatskoi Noss, which is in about 70° 5′ latitude, the longitude about 175° E or 6° east of Baranov Kamene, which is exactly half way between Cape North and Baranov Kamene. Tchaon bay, with its two islands, and the dwellings between the island of Illeree, or Sabedei of Shalaouroff, and the main land, were also recognized by the Baron. They were doubtless inhabited, as the expedition was in their tracks for three days. The run of the

coast from the Kolyma to Shelatskoi Noss, is about ENE. and that from the Noss to the East, very easterly from Cape Kuzmin.

No doubt whatever can be now entertained of Deshneff having gone round the NE. Cape, no other impediment but ice appearing to exist; as little, or less need there be, of Shalaouroff's having reached it, he having actually described Tchaon Bay, although he placed it too far to the northward, as he did also Shelatskoi Noss, while in fact, the theory of Mr. Coxe respecting this country is perfectly correct. Baron Wrangel and Cook may be said to have seen across the intervening space which has not actually been traversed by Europeans.

The present moment appears the best for introducing an extract of Baron Wrangel's letter to me, after his journey across the Frozen Sea, and the track of which will appear upon the chart annexed. The Baron observes that, although I should otherwise hear all particulars about the expedition to the north from the Kolyma, still he feels disposed to give me some information on the subject. "I have," he continues, "used your suggestion with some alterations, and what has been done during the last voyage, is certainly done by this invention of yours; used in such a manner as I used it, it proved to be très risquant. It was indeed a very happy accident, that the white bears having *circumnavigated* the ice mountain, on the top of which I had made the storehouse, several times, did not attempt to as-

cend it, as they, the bears, would have had no difficulty in destroying such fortifications; although I before thought to the contrary, especially as the dog master said, that none of the dreadful white bear regiment, had either force or ability to rob us either of our own or the dogs' provisions, out of its strong concealment. Nevertheless, I have seen, during the late voyage, such tricks of these white bears, that *the precautions I took* for the preservation of our provisions I call a *happy accident.* Should I make the same voyage the next spring, I will take no *fire-wood* at all, but take wood prepared to build a stronger cellar within the ice, and dry moss, with fish oil, shall serve to boil the tea kettle; a circumstance which will much relieve the dogs, as to point of weight, as well as serve us upon our return in respect of fire-wood."

Although I cannot but do justice to the Baron's general and scientific knowledge, I confess I do not know precisely what he means by the term *happy accident.* The idea I suggested was to prevent an accident, and I suppose, therefore, the Baron meant that it was a happy circumstance that the bears did not ascend the mountain, as in that case the precautions taken would have been useless. To enable the Baron to go farther, with more ease to the dogs, two days' provisions for the homeward voyage were to be buried at every third day's outward voyage: the plan of securing such provisions of course must be left entirely to the ingenuity of

the party travelling, as well as to the means presented by the situation of the ice. But I think, with half a dozen people, I could secure provisions in such a manner as, not indeed to elude the sagacity of the bears, but to prove the inefficacy of their strength, when put in competition with the sagacity of man.

The Baron next proceeds to point out the rather dangerous situation in which he was latterly placed, the last nine days of his journey being over a field of ice, in general but half a foot thick, although only in the latter part of April. During many parts of this journey, they came to open channels, five and seven feet wide, and each night brought with it strong north and north-west winds, which made the ice tremble beneath their cold pillows. At times sounds like the roar of thunder would assail their ears, yet prove only to be the shattering of ice hills, and the severing of the fields of ice. At one period the Baron, and his friend Mr. Matiushkin, were gone in quest of a white bear, to feed the dogs, which had suffered much, when the ice broke under their feet with such a noise, that Mr. M. actually called out "what will now become of us?" while the Baron was so convinced of its being thunder, that he looked to the south, in expectation of seeing the lightning that must precede the second peal. The Cossacks, however, pointed out that the ice was breaking, which induced him to make the best of his way towards the close ice,

then distant three or four miles. The dog-master and Cossacks expressed much regret at continuing the direct course, but, fortunately, they arrived safe, and reached the Kolyma in the beginning of May. I have used the term fortunate, as the subsequent spring and summer, or rather the continuation of winter, proved the most extraordinary ever known at the Kolyma; a severity attending them which might have permitted the commander of the expedition to risk much more in point of time than Baron Wrangel then thought prudent.

The ice did not break up until the 29th May, O. S. The coldness of the summer was most extraordinary. On the 20th June, 2nd July, and 3rd August there was much snow, *and one degree and a half of cold of* REAUMUR, without intermission, accompanied with constant NW. gales. The month of May, although so cold, was the only agreeable weather during spring or summer; and the appearances of a bad season were very distressing. Neither the small rivers running into the Kolyma, nor the Kolyma itself, had on the 15th of August produced any fish, in consequence of the height of the waters. The only hope of the poor inhabitants and of the expedition, rested on the interval betwixt the time of the river freezing and the month of December. On the 13th August, the Baron received information that the rein deer chase on the Aniuy and Omelon had entirely failed, and that the Yukagiri were in a stateof starvation.

The 22nd August it snowed hard, and continued to snow till the 25th, when the lakes were all frozen over. On the 30th August, Baron Wrangel was frozen up in a boat in the Kolyma, and hoary winter was dated from that period, as the river now became passable. I shall here conclude my observations respecting this indefatigable young officer by saying, that, for a combination of personal exertion and sacrifice, with the most undoubted scientific knowledge, especially that of practical and theoretical astronomy, so necessary to conduct an expedition of this nature, I believe Baron Wrangel has no equal in the Russian navy.

CHAPTER VIII.

Departure from the Kolyma—Lapteff—Sredne Kolymsk—Kosatchey Ostrog—Verchne Kolymsk—The Zyzanka—Hokusolbetee and Bocheera—Boulouktak --Kourouack--Terachtack, &c.—Kourdak—Andigezan—Intack—Omekon—Nera—Indigirka, Rivers—The Tongousi Tribe—The Koudousou and Kounounaksala Rivers—The Okota—Okotsk.

WINTER was still raging with all its severity when I prepared to quit the Kolyma. I could now, indeed, have no inducement to remain longer; my desire of penetrating through the country of the Tchuktchi no longer existed, but for the purpose of getting across to the opposite continent: and as I had failed, through the avarice of the savages, I determined to proceed to Okotsk, by the direct route, in spite of the remonstrances of the Commissary, Cossacks and Yakuti, who were ordered to attend me wherever I might go. The proper mode was by that I had previously come; but I wished of course to avoid near two thousand miles of such sameness, independent of my desire to reach Okotsk by the first of June. The Yakuti were so fearful of a route of the kind, that they even attempted to bribe me with presents to take another; but I was resolutely fixed upon the new route, and the result will show that I had only myself to thank

for the difficulties I encountered, and the narrow escapes I had so often for my life. To me, however, the hardest day's work was followed by the happiest evening, and the soundest sleep as I lay down on my snow pillow.

With grateful recollections of the hospitality and kind treatment I had experienced from every individual in the commissariat of Kolyma, I departed on the 27th of March in a narte royal, that is, one drawn by thirteen dogs, who took me eighty miles in one day; a prodigious day's journey, as it is considered in this part of the world, for the same dogs to perform. The 1st of May is, however, the period usually calculated on for the Omekon rivers breaking up, and I was a long distance from it; I was therefore compelled to hasten, to prevent a detention on the banks of it for six weeks. I could not but feel melancholy and sick at heart at parting as it were from a brother, in the person of Baron Wrangel. However, I pushed forward, and in three days reached Lapieff, one hundred and eighty miles from Nishney Kolymsk. The weather was most variable; in the early part of the morning we had 15° of frost, at noon as many of heat, from the reflection of the sun, and in the evening again, 10° of frost. The mornings, before the sun appeared, were the coldest I ever endured, being, really, more severe than 40° of frost, owing to the heavy fogs which prevail in the latter end of March and

beginning of April, which strike an indescribable cold to the whole frame.

At Lapteff I met my old friend, the venerable prince of ninety-one. He had just returned from a visit to another prince, twenty miles distant, and insisted upon accompanying me the following morning; and such was his health and capability to bear the piercing morning air, that while I was compelled to walk, as it seemed to save my life, the old Yakut Prince was quietly walking his horse to a sort of humming tune, which may be said to constitute a Yakut's song. There is no regular meaning in what they sing, being made up of any incidental allusions to the weather, trees, rivers, fatigues, horses, and the like, according to the immediate impulse of the moment.

From Lapteff I continued my route to Sredne Kolymsk, where I arrived on the fifth day at noon, much fatigued. I was exceedingly gratified with the repetition of old kindnesses and remembrances on the part of the inhabitants, as I came along. They were cheerfully looking forward to an early summer, in which, alas, they were bitterly disappointed. They were constantly presenting me with the first partridges and hares, which the approaching sun had sent in advance; and even other early delicacies were given me in aid of the long journey I had before me.

The day that I reached Sredne Kolymsk I started

a large gray wolf, and being on horse-back was nearly thrown into the snow, as I had repeatedly been before. A burnt child is said to dread the fire, so a bit horse dreads a wolf: the one I rode had so suffered. The only pleasure I experienced in Sredne Kolymsk was being housed in the comfortable abode of my old attendant, who was, in the absence of the Commissary, chief of the department. I renewed the protestations of my fidelity and good will towards a person I felt so highly indebted to; and the certificate which I gave him of his extraordinary good conduct and kindness towards me was, I am happy to say, occasion of his being made a serjeant; beyond which, though he does not at present aspire, he will necessarily attain, as any under officer, whose conduct is good in that rank for a certain number of years, may demand the rank of an officer as a recompense.

I remained with my old friend a couple of days, awaiting a fresh Cossack, who was ordered to attend me to Okotsk. I felt most happy in preparing once more to tread a new road, and throw aside the difficulties which were for ever thundered in my ears. The poor young love-sick Cossack destined to attend me I could not but pity. He had a positive fear of going to Okotsk, so far from his wife, a pretty young girl, and then again to Yakutsk, where he would be detained five or six months, and thus be kept from his home at least a

twelvemonth. These indeed were no small complaints. Leaving his home at that time had this additional consequence, that his presence was then most wanted to assist in fishing. The case was not, however, so bad as my readers may imagine; for when a Cossack is absent from his home upon the public service, his family still receive the proportion of fish which would have accrued to him had he been present; on such friendly terms do the people live in this part of the world. And upon my promising him that he should return direct to the Kolyma, he was reconciled, and we prepared to depart.

Our first day's journey was to a place called Kasachey, sixty miles, by a good path, on the Kolyma, abounding with summer establishments for fishing, else a dreary low waste, producing nothing but stunted wood. I felt really happy in the evening in the comfortable residence of a rich Yakut, who had married a Cossack's daughter. She was dreadfully afflicted with the hiccoughs, and I again tried my *medical skill*, by giving her a slap on the back. It had no effect; and her husband then told me that she had the deeavel ootra, or the devil in her belly. It was apparent there was something in the case; but whether a devil or a child, I do not pretend to know. Whatever it was, it effectually deprived me of sleep. The malady continued the whole night; though it seems the parties afflicted with it can, during the fit, sleep soundly:

but on the instance I have this day seen of its effects upon a lovely young woman I will not dwell: it is too melancholy.

The following day, over numerous large lakes, and a rich pasture country, I resumed my journey. Many Yakuti live in the environs, employed in fishing, and in the chase of bears, rein-deer, sables, and squirrels: the latter are here innumerable. In the afternoon we were thrown into a snow pit: the fall and plunging of our horses threw us off our saddles; and the horses, finding themselves disengaged from their burthens, scrambled up the pit, and left us and our baggage to shift as we could. After ten miles walk we reached a yourte, whose owner saddled his own beasts, and sent them for the baggage, while our own Yakuti went in search of their own horses. I was, mean time, made perfectly comfortable, and amused myself with the tricks of a shamane, or sorcerer, some of which were indeed strange enough. He wore a sort of short surtout, covered over with a variety of small pieces of iron, about the size and shape of the pointed blade of a pen-knife; his boots were embroidered, as were also his cap and gloves. The performance of course began by smoking a pipe; then taking his tambourine and bolouyak, or tambourine-stick, he seated himself crossed legged near the person to be exorcised, and began to sing a doleful ditty, accompanied by more doleful music; the import of the song I could not gather. After this introduction

he began to jump, hop and fling about, roaring, screaming, and making the most hideous distortions of face and body, so that I actually believed him to be mad. I never felt more pain for any one than I felt for this shamann, certainly much more than for the sick person, on whose behalf his incantations were made. After this violent exercise, he drew his knife, and, to all appearance, plunged it into his belly. I really felt alarmed, believing that he had actually committed suicide: he, however, drew back the knife in my presence without any effusion of blood, and indeed without any actual incision being made. He then formally announced that the evil spirit would not triumph, provided the customary sacrifice were made, of a fat mare. The party were then dismissed with an invitation to come to the next day's feast, when the mare was to be cooked. In all this conjuration, there was indeed no slight of hand, but rather a slight of the belly, and the case is, that the shamanns are, from habit, accustomed to draw in that part of the belly which the knife is supposed to penetrate, to a distance of five or six inches; they never however use other than their own knives, from fear, I presume, of their being too long. The power of these impostors over the ignorant multitude is very great, but they do not wander far from their principality, nor are they numerous. Their pretensions extend to the cure of diseases, changing the weather, affording successful chase, and finding stolen things.

In the early part of the evening, a ludicrous circumstance occurred betwixt the above shamann and myself. I had invited him to take tea with me; and when he came I put a little tobacco in the palm of my Cossack's hand, to give to the shamann. The Cossack, however, carelessly or ignorantly put it into the tea-kettle, supposing it to be tea, and the mistake was not known until the kettle was brought boiling-hot, and pouring it out, we discovered by the flavour that it was tobacco-water. The shamann was highly indignant and enraged, the people of the house still more so, and the sick person must die, unless a second sacrifice was made. This I was extremely anxious to avoid, and the only remedy I had, was to part with half the spirits I possessed, which, although a loss of consequence to me, I readily endured to prevent the impostor from procuring a second gormandising feast, at the expense, if not the ruin, of the poor people. As it was, the shamann got roaring drunk on the result of the mistake, and so I left him.

The horses did not return with the baggage till near midnight, when one bag of my clothing was missing, as well as mypipe; the last, a serious loss, as it was my friend, companion, comforter, and almost sole enjoyment. I could have mourned for it, like Sancho after his dapple, but it was fruitless, and I accordingly wished the possessor the enjoyment of it for my sake. Next day over a stubby heath, affording a fine view of the mountains to the south-

east, we gained sixty miles. I observed on the lakes, numerous parties fishing through the ice, who gave me a supply whenever I desired it. On the fourth day I reached Verchne Kolymsk late in the evening, suffering much from the loss of skin, which left my nose and lips bare. The whole distance was two hundred and fifty miles.

Verchne Kolymsk is considered a large village, having fifteen dwellings, with near two hundred inhabitants. It stands in a most bleak and exposed situation, on the right bank of the Yasashna, at about a mile from its junction with the Kolyma. It was at this place that the vessels for Billings's expedition were built, the country to the southward abounding in fine timber: and yet it is considered, although so far south as the latitude of 60° 30′, to be one of the coldest places in Eastern Siberia, the thermometer falling as low as 43° of Reaumur. Verchne Kolymsk has nothing remarkable to boast of but a large cross erected by Billings, on which are cut out the names of the European people who composed his expedition—an expedition which performed nothing. I remained one day to change my Cossack, preferring rather to beat up for a volunteer than to take on the old one, but to no purpose. Whether from fear of me or of the journey it is unnecessary to enquire.

My route from the Kolyma was towards the Koussoul Bolouktak, a lake so named from a fish which inhabits it. The first part of the journey

was attended with a little snow, but I felt consoled by the number of pigeons and hares which encreased our sea stores, for thus I may name them, since I had really more to do with water than with land. At length I reached the Zyzanka, and at twenty miles farther, the last habitation of the Kolyma district. We halted in a rocky hill, and encountered some difficulty in bringing fire-wood for the night, from a distance of at least half a mile. The second day, with infinite labour, through deep and soft snow, we reached twenty miles further, encamping at the foot of the mountains which I had before seen stretching from the south-east. The guide who though a Yakut, spoke Russian well, proved a choice and jovial fellow; while the Cossack, a dull and melancholy milk-sop, was throwing every possible obstacle in my way to induce me to take the other road. This, it appears, from letters which I have since received, he was directed to do by a person holding an official situation; an act, which if known at the government of Yakutsk, Irkutsk, or St. Petersburgh, would, I am sure, have been visited with severe punishment: but commissaries in such places are generally both mean and worthless. Still along the banks of the Zyzanka we continued to the south-west, picking up at intervals, partridges and hares which had fallen in the traps. The scenery at times somewhat interesting, and the hills composed of slate.

The road I was now upon was that formerly used by the post from Yakutsk to the river Kolyma, that is by way of Okotsk, but discontinued in consequence of the difficulties which constantly presented themselves, as well as by the discovery of the direct route I had before undertaken, and of which I have given a sketch. By this route a man can never be satisfied, as when there is much snow, there is more labour; and when little snow, much water; and when no snow, much ice and more danger, for the ice becomes so slippery as to be almost impassable.

The reflection of the sun at first produced severe effects upon my eyes; but I met it with a good grace, as neither sun nor snow would give way to me. From the Zyzanka I entered a narrow defile formed by two lofty ranges of mountains, the valley betwixt which runs from east to west; the latter was my course. The southern range were bold and perpendicular, and consequently bare rocks. The northern branch, which was open to the south, rose into gentle and luxuriant eminences, affording fine contrast to the desolation on the left. Our party continued to feed upon partridges and hares from the charity traps. The birds are beguiled by touching a small wooden fork, supporting a log or tree which falls direct on the animal and causes instant death. These traps are so numerous, that I have in a day got three and four braces of hares and partridges. They are set by the wan-

dering Yakuti and Tongousi, open to all the world, with an understanding only, that the trap shall be again set—no hard condition to hungry people.

We at length entered upon the Hokusolbetee and Bocheera, two rivers, which, entering the Zyzanka at a narrow defile, form a sort of frozen torrent, over which the horses had great difficulty to pass, as piles of ice lay in every cross direction. The Cossack and guide now began also to suffer, while I was gaining ground from habit and superior strength of constitution. The guide was almost blind, while the Cossack was afflicted with a severe diarrhœa arising from want of food, for our game had failed us, and he was too much a Greek to eat horse-meat. It was, however, his own fault, for he always ate voraciously whenever an occasion offered. With these two invalids I resumed the journey, prescribing for them, but without effect, and at noon was obliged again to halt, as they were unable to proceed. The heat of the sun by Fahrenheit was 80°, and the route was bad, ascending a perilous and laborious chain of elevated hills. The work which now devolved upon me was so much more than ordinary, that I could not but feel it severely: it was, however, my duty to assist those whom I had demanded to assist me, and I could make no complaint.

The snow was deep, but soft, the noon day heat melting the surface, and the night's frost again freezing it, just sufficiently to bear a man with snow

shoes; so that in addition to our other difficulties the horses began to fail. We nevertheless continued our route, gaining the Zyzanka, and latterly crossing the mountains which confine it. We then entered the most dismal, dreary, and inhospitable valley I have ever seen; not a blade of grass, nor moss, not a shrub, tree, nor even a morsel of drift wood to be seen, but one tremendous slate mountain valley. We encamped on the banks of the stream, faring upon our frozen horse flesh and a little biscuit—my spirit was all consumed, and I longed to reach some habitation. My poor Cossack now grew worse, having been three days without food, and so weak that it was necessary to lash him to the horse. The guide was almost blind, being unable even to bring the horses in from the pasture. I was thus compelled to perform the functions of ostler, wood-cutter, guide, doctor, cook, and traveller: I took little heed of it, and slept the sounder.

Leaving this desolate valley, our route lay over a few rugged hills, by a path which seemed to point itself out as the proper route. We soon entered upon the river Koulgall, and the romantic valley of Bolouktak, named from the lake and stream, the latter of which enters the narrow defile in the elevated southern ranges. The prospect is most beautiful: tolerable sized wood occupies the fore ground, with a small hill, which I ascended, to obtain a better view of the magnificent panorama. To describe

it would require a far more able pen or pencil than mine. The southern range appeared much indented, and seemed to cast a shade over their otherwise milky appearance. Two yourtes on the borders of a lake were on the left, while from the right, the river winded over the plain. The whole view occupied from south-west to east, and from west to north-east, so that the valley runs from east-north-east to west-south-west. The breadth of it is about twenty miles. I remained at a miserable yourte five days, to see what I could do in restoring the Cossack, but in vain, and departed with a Yakut, six feet high and stout in proportion, the largest I have ever seen. He was, however, a mere brute, not knowing a word of the Russian language; a great glutton, stupid, obstinate, and immoveably lazy.

It was with great reluctance I commenced the road with him, but there was no alternative, he being the only person who knew any thing of the route towards the Omekon. At about fifteen miles, having passed three small lakes, we reached the base of the southern range of hills. We ascended them against wind and snow, and night closed in upon us as we had reached thirty miles, in the bosom of the mountains. It was impossible to keep in a fire from the driving of the snow; I therefore managed as well as I could, while my half savage gigantic companion comforted himself with at least twenty pounds of frozen horse meat.

Next day I crossed with my companions the Kourouack mountains, at the base of which runs the little rapid river of this name, which we passed with difficulty as it was giving way very fast to the warmth of the sun, the thermometer standing at 27° of Reaumur. The mountains now exhibit a constant and uniform succession of equi-lateral triangles, or pyramids of stone slate, with layers of the same yellow earth called Stone Butter, which I have before noticed as being eaten by the aborigines. The next river was the Terachtack and Ootachan-Taroon Oract, or large icy river, as it signifies in the Yakut dialect. Our route proved difficult, now over overflowed meadows and large rivers, or elevated mountains, well wooded with larches, alder, and some pine. On the fifth day we ascended a stupendous peak, which overlooks not only the surrounding country but also the other mountains; it is almost a bare rock, and was so slippery that the horses got very severe falls in the ascent, rolling back in one moment as much as it had taken ten minutes labour to achieve. I almost despaired of gaining the summit, but we at length succeeded, and then the horses actually slid down the opposite precipice of one hundred feet high, the rock being covered with frozen snow. For myself I considered it, as it really was, an ice mountain, and desiring the guide to follow, passed down without any accident. I was now indeed in a desperate dilemma; but Providence which ever

watches the wants of all his creatures, sent to my assistance the sick Cossack, who, having got better, and being without baggage, had followed our track with a couple of horses. He came in time also to tell us that we had mistaken the route. His duty pointing out the necessity of seeing me safe to Okotsk, I did not feel so thankful as I else should, because I suspected that most of his illness was pretended, and that conscience had told him he was acting wrong, or he would not have returned.

We passed the night in a dreary situation, without any fire. My tea and bread were both consumed: nothing in short remained but horse flesh, which I found very good. The Cossack had brought a few birds, but as I knew that such dainties were all he could, or would eat, of course I gave them up to him. Next day we considered how to ascend the mountain; the snow was solid and slippery, and there appeared no other mode than the one which we adopted,—creeping up the side, and chopping the surface, with a hatchet, at frequent intervals, to obtain some sort of footing. In this manner I and the Cossack ascended and making all the leather thongs fast together, we hauled up the baggage and let it down on the opposite side; thus placing ourselves between it and the horses. To get up the latter required more management; for accustomed as the horses are to the most laborious and dangerous journeys, and with all their sagacity and tameness, I found they

could not ascend above half the mountain, before they were compelled to give it up, and recoil once more to the base in a state of perfect agony. Thus passed the day! Our situation now seemed desperate; the horses had received no food for two days, during which we had enjoyed no fire: yet still 'neboice avoce lebo' (fear not—perhaps) were the rallying words, and these alone served us for supper. Our monster of a guide was quite insensible to our situation, and sat grumbling that he had not more than twenty pounds of meat a day, with such hard work.

This night was passed even more miserably than the last, as we had not even the benefit of our bedding or clothing, both of which had been hurled down the opposite valley, without respect to whom they belonged. We rose, the third morning, prepared for hard work; and our first attempt was to haul the horses up the precipice. We in part succeeded, as the strongest were actually received, and cast adrift on the opposite side to feed. This occupied us all day, and the third night was passed with the cheering hopes of resuming our journey the following day; but these were frustrated, as it was not until late in the evening that we succeeded in passing all the horses we designed to keep: one we were obliged to kill and carry with us as food. Our bully-headed Yakut too became wonderfully alert on this occasion, knowing he should receive an extra allowance of meat,

were it for no other reason than to lighten the other brutes. I however determined to make some reserve, and accordingly taking a quantity of the slaughtered animal sufficient to serve the Yakut on his return, I buried it in the snow, which I thought would continue unmelted for ten or twelve days, and marked the place with a cross.

The only mode of passing the last three horses, was by making a regular stair case up the hill, by means of axes, and strewing it with earth, myself and the Cossack who were on the hill, holding a rope attached to the horse's head, while the guide behind whose task it was to flog the beast had no sinecure, as from his immoderate size, he was almost himself incapable of moving. The result of the last five days was that we had lost five days' travelling, five days of the best season, and five days which were worth fifty of those which followed. The weather was still very cold, and I felt some relief in getting close to a cheerful fire. Next day I directed my course by a compass, for the guide knew nothing about west-south-west, intending if possible to gain the river Indigirka. We crossed many hills, deep in snow, and left two horses dead, a circumstance which seemed to please the guide, whom I was consequently obliged to declare under martial law; being confident that he cared not if I and the Cossack perished. I was now compelled to put the little baggage we had left upon the spare horses, and we all con-

tinued the journey on foot, encamping for the night on the banks of the Kourdouk, which we traversed the next day with tolerable ease; being clear of snow, with a fresh breeze right-aft: in the evening it turned to rain, the first real shower since September, as we halted on the banks of the same stream, having walked about fifteen miles. We passed the night in a sort of growling way, and renewed our journey towards the Terachtack over a pleasant pasture and well wooded country.

All the rivers which I had lately passed, run into the Indigirka, and although small, are rapid streams. My guide was now so negligent and useless, that I was compelled to desire the Cossack to flog him with his own whip, in a manner which, in England would justly have been considered severe; but I am satisfied the necessity and danger of our situation justified the measure, for the fellow was really deceiving us, to say nothing of the risk which was very great, unprovided as we were with nets or fire-arms. Leaving another horse to abide his fate, we continued on, dividing the extra baggage between us. We crossed the Ambardach and Chousgindrach, adding another walk to the fatigue we had undergone; and being still eighty miles from the nearest habitation, we rested at a rich pasture two days for the sake of the horses, and on the third reached the Andigizan, Intach, and Omekon. The country had now become gradually very agreeable and open, and the weather was very

fine. Great quantities of game, as geese, ducks, partridges and woodcocks hovered over our heads, and we saw numerous traces of quadrupeds; as bears, wolves, foxes, rein-deer, and hares, with sometimes that of an elk. The last day of this journey through an extra effort, induced by the hope of success, we reached the first habitation of the Omekon district; walking and swimming that day near thirty miles: I say swimming, for we were frequently obliged to wade across the rivers, and to swim over many yards of rapid stream, which I accomplished for myself, by means of a rope fastened to a horse's neck. I reached, all well, the Bolouvanach, and then the more considerable Nera, all rivers which unite with the Indigirka. I was received at a yourte, the most pleasant and hospitable, as I then thought, I had ever seen, where I procured two fresh horses to carry the baggage, and continued the route, leading all the other horses, now reduced to five.

My over grown guide was of course discharged. I could not even remain a moment to refresh, as the rivers were breaking up and threatening to insulate me for some months from the rest of the world. The Omekon river was still distant one hundred and fifty miles, and I had scanty means of reaching it under four days, even supposing assistance given: but I pressed on, gratified to catch now and then in the distant horizon the sight of smoke, which I had not seen during the last journey of more than three hundred miles. Not one in-

dividual stationary or wandering had I met from the lake Bolouktak: but now we were as may be termed, risen from the dead, renewed with fresh courage, and my Cossack particularly inspirited with a regale of beef which had been given him at the first yourte. For myself, I preferred to partake of the old horse meat I had still left; having a mind to shame the Cossack, and show him that he ought to eat any thing, when necessity dictated. I had passed twelve days without any other food than the horse meat we had brought, and a small part of the animal we had killed; yet I was never in better health. In this state I reached the hospitable abode of the Prince Nicolai. Our journey had lain on the Nera and Indigirka, the country sterile and dreary and as desolate as Zashiversk, lower down the same river. The second day I again halted at the abode of a Yakut Knez (prince), who presented me with half a rein-deer, and treated me with milk and tea, making me as I thought, the happiest of men:—such is the effect produced by present comforts and enjoyments upon past hardships.

Independent of the provisions given to me, I was obliged to receive two red foxes, as a tribute. They were presented to me by the hands of a tolerably good looking Yakut girl, whose father, with two other princes, formed a part of my train to the abode of the prince of the Omekon, where we arrived the following day.

The latter part of the journey changed for the

better; from rugged and sterile hills, and marshy swamps, to beautiful rising and well wooded eminences, and fertile meadow lands; from perfect desolation, to comparative populousness. The first sight of so many smoking chimneys gladdened my heart in an unusual degree. I felt the value of life, and never enjoyed it more than in the hospitable yourte of Peter Gotossop, the Yakut Prince of the Omekon. He had come thirty miles, in consequence of an express, to meet me. I need not say how much I enjoyed a bed of rein-deer skins in his yourte, after lodging fifteen days, without intermission, in the snow.

The valley of Omekon is indeed a romantic and fertile spot. About five hundred individuals are reckoned within its principality, who are scattered about, wandering with the numerous droves of cattle, as the season and height of the river will permit, or compel. The woods are very fine and large, consisting of birch, pine, larch, and cedar, the last producing a highly flavoured, though small nut, which is exported to Okotsk and Kamtchatka.

The quantity of cattle in this valley is prodigious, no less than three thousand mares, and near two thousand cows, the property of the few rich Yakuti. The consumption of them is, however, not small, especially of horses, owing to the great demand made by the government, in forced levies, for Okotsk, and the more northern districts. But so fond are the Yakuti, of their horses, that to

avoid selling them, and sending them upon such a service, they drive a couple of young bullocks, as an exchange for a horse, to the first place, or will present another person with a young bullock, for each horse that is supplied him to carry on the extra service. The duty thus performed by them is undertaken purely for gluttony. The substitute instantly makes a feast of the young bullock, and trusts to the strength of his horse to make good the duty imposed upon it; yet, strange to say, it is seldom that a respectable Yakut will either ride himself, or suffer others to ride, much less will he load a good horse: indeed, they are kept rather for show than use: thus the duty falls upon the poor. In the event of a horse falling on the road, the Yakut is of course obliged to buy or get another as he can. Sometimes he will exchange in time, by giving three for two, and five for two, according to the state they are in: generally, however, he will kill them, and employ other people to perform the latter part of the journey, giving or promising a dead horse or two in payment, and himself returning on foot.

I remained three days at the Omekon, and was again obliged to leave my Cossack, from ill health and fatigue. Having procured in his stead a young lad, born in the valley of Omekon, with him and four of the native princes in my train, I departed along the banks of the River, running along one of the most picturesque and finest valleys in the universe,

yielding the best grass in the province, and abounding with animals of the chase. Having reached thirty miles, we put up at the yourte of a wealthy Knez. In the passage of the river each horse was attended by four men, owing to the velocity of the stream; the men resisting it by means of stout poles thrust into the bed of the river on their leeward side. The passage was certainly dangerous, but necessary to be accomplished without delay, before the melting of the snow on the lofty and magnificent mountains all around render the river terrific and impassable. The Omekon uniting with the Indigirka not far from hence, constitutes the latter for a season a first rate river in Siberia. Already, the meadow lands on each side of the river represent innumerable lakes, which are swum over by the horses with much difficulty. At eighty miles we exchanged horses: here I had a difference with the Cossack and guide, as to what horse I should ride, both insisting on the one proposed to me being the most proper. As I did not like his appearance, I said I was not accustomed to take the best in their estimation, nor even in my own; therefore I would be content with that which was already saddled for the guide. The latter said it was a vicious one, that it stumbled, startled, and, indeed, had all sorts of defects. I persisted, however, in observing to the guide, that I was accustomed to those matters, and, therefore, preferred giving him the best horse.

Recourse was at length had to frighten me out of my determination to attempt the journey to Okotsk at such a season of the year. The princes proposed that I should remain with them three or four weeks, when the rivers would subside, and the journey would then be even agreeable. All, however, that they could get from me was to go with horses one hundred miles farther, and then take rein-deer. Their excellent and clean yourtes, the hospitality of the people, the productions of the country, the quantity of partridges, ducks, geese, plovers, and fine beef presented to me, the richness of the cream, and above all, the romantic scenery, which abounds, and the happiness which reigns in the valley of Omekon, might indeed have proved strong allurements with me to pass my life with them, but held not out sufficient charms to induce me to avoid a difficult journey. The weather was now very fine, but the nights and mornings were still cold. The princes continued to accompany me through their magnificent retirement, which is near five hundred miles from any other establishment, Okotsk and Bolouktak being the nearest. I had a long conversation with the Prince about Yasack, a tribute peculiar to Siberia. He said that the quantity was nothing, but that the mode of collecting it was a serious evil. The tribute they would freely give to the Emperor, but it was what the commissaries took from them by force, and which they gave to avoid vexatious and liti-

gious treatment, that was oppressive: and these commissaries have great power.

Whether Yasack is or is not an impolitic tax, remains to be proved; and whether a direct tax upon certain articles consumed by the Yakuti, and all aborigines, would not yield a greater revenue, may be doubted: at all events, the present system is liable to the greatest injustice and robbery. I have no doubt that each commissary receives from the district he governs, more furs for himself than for the Emperor. The Prince was not a little surprised when I told him, that, comparatively, he paid little taxes, and that other countries paid more. Among many taxes, I told him, that in England he could not shoot wild ducks without permission, and even if he did shoot them in his own garden, he must not take them up to eat. Finding him incredulous, I then told him that he could not have more than a certain number of windows to his house without paying a tax. These two samples sufficed to make him perfectly satisfied with his government, till I informed him, on the other hand, that no person in England could be compelled to carry government or private goods without being paid his own price. Every thing, however, which I told him to prove the evident superiority of England, as to the personal liberty of the subject, failed to weaken his natural preference of wandering over his native soil, to the visiting of strange lands. Thus we rode along the picturesque valley for

twenty miles, when we crossed numerous lakes which were not as yet melted. They are surrounded by opulent Yakuti establishments during the summer season, for the fish which abounds in them.

We next crossed the mountains, and entered upon another fine pasture country, watered by the Torrourack; and halted at the last yourte in the government of Yakutsk. It was a miserable place, although the kindness of its inhabitants procured me a quantity of game. In its vicinity I passed through a herd of rein-deer, attended by the wandering Tongousi I was in search of. Their chief, was however, forty miles distant, whither I repaired the next day, along a wide expanding valley, opening to the south-east, and reached at sunset the encampment of prince Shoumeeloff. Having previously sent a herald in advance, I was received by him, with his sword by his side, his medals suspended from the neck, and dressed in a rich suit of black velveteen, and a cocked hat. I could not help laughing at the grotesque appearance of the prince, while I pitied him, and despised the means which had been used to divest so ignorant a man of his property, by the lure of honors of this kind. I do not by these words mean to intimate, that the necessity for such distinctions does not exist; but I do say, that the purposes for which they are conferred on an ignorant savage, are of the most despicable nature. This man, prince Shoumeeloff, was formerly a rich Tongousian; now he is a poor one: he had as many thousands of rein-

deer, as he has now hundreds. But his free presents, added to extortions and exactions, for the chance of forced, although useless services, have so reduced his property, that he is obliged to eat fish, which is considered by the rein-deer Tongousi as a hardship; and to send out his people to maintain themselves in the woods, with their bows and arrows. Powder is too dear, or not to be had, but by a present to the chief of more than its equivalent; he having the power to deny it altogether. Shoumeeloff now dreads going to Okotsk, even in search of moss for his rein-deer, preferring, as he says, to live a real Tongousian wanderer, than a servile tributary to chiefs, commissaries, and other officers, although he glories in paying what is just.

I found him an obliging sort of man, although too free a use of liquor had made him at times a quarrelsome one. We took a pipe and a glass of vodka together, and, as he spoke the Russian language, we descanted upon the means he had of accommodating me with rein-deer, as far as Okotsk. He said, what was true, that he had only just left the vicinity of that place, in search of northern pastures, and that although he might possibly be able to reach Okotsk, he would still lose the benefit of the pasturage; as by the time he could return winter would have commenced. I felt the force of his reasoning, but the service was his in point of law, as the season for employing or compelling horses, had not yet commenced; and therefore over a fresh glass of vodka, which had been given

to me, on the Omekon, by a retired Cossack, he consented to take me.

In the neighbourhood there are eighty-seven of his tribe under his command, over whom he holds considerable power, as I have frequently witnessed; but they are in general a hard working people. I was amused with their manner of catching rein-deer, as it reminded me of the hunting of wild bullocks I had seen in Mexico; with this difference only, that there the man rides a horse fully trained, and here a rein-deer. They use a long line, which is coiled up in their hands, as sailors handle a log line, and galloping past the intended victim, they throw the noose at the end of the line, over the horns. In America it is more dangerous, and the horseman is obliged to seek safety in flight, unless he can run the bullock into a thick enclosure, where he becomes entangled by the length of the line.

Next day I paid the prince a formal visit at his principal tent. He received me again in his gala dress, presented me with tea, tobacco, and toasted rein-deer meat, and lastly with the marrow of the fore legs,—the last I esteemed most. He had purposely killed a rein-deer for me and sent me half; I of course presented him with some tobacco and powder, and upon the demand of his wife, with a bottle of spirits, in return for which she gave me two red foxes.

On the third day we departed with fifty head of

rein-deer; his whole herd consisting of about two thousand: fifteen were put at my disposal, while the rest were retained for his own consumption and emergencies. The prince said, that as none of his people knew the summer mountain route, he would accompany me. I took this as a good omen of his kindness to me, and his desire to forward me on my way; the result will, however, prove how far I was mistaken. At ten miles we halted in a pleasant valley in a violent snow storm. The Tongousi were not long before they pitched their tent, but I preferred the open pure air, with all the annoyance of the snow, to the harbour of such a close place, and with such a filthy set: I will, however, do the prince the justice to say, that he begged I would take refuge in his tent, enlarging upon its comforts, &c. We continued our route thirty miles the next day; the first half along the valley, and the other over the hills leading to the river Torrourack, which we had crossed before. The third day the laden rein-deer began to lag and droop; the snow was very deep, and the nasten, or the melted and re-frozen snow, was not sufficient to bear the animals. A rein-deer cannot carry above one hundred pounds upon his back, but with that and good roads they may be able to go thirty and forty miles: otherwise, six or seven miles a day is the average. We shot a few partridges, for the Tongousi in general have guns, and secured one wild rein-deer, which last was equally divided be-

tween his party and mine. The wild rein-deer are generally considered as of those who formerly belonged to them, but had strayed away. By some little trickery they are decoyed into their camps; but wild and tame rein-deer have a natural aversion to one another.

The fourth and fifth days we made but little progress, the weather was bad, and the rein-deer dropping off, for we had already lost four by fatigue. The Prince grew angry, and threatening either to leave me or carry me back, to which, as on the one hand I felt no way inclined to submit, I was careful on the other not to compel him, by provoking or abusive conduct, well knowing the character of the Tongousi. We reached an elevated pass in the mountains, which leads to the vicinity of Idgiga, but were unable to cross it, owing to the state of the snow. The sixth day we renewed the attempt upon the passage, but were again compelled to give up, three laden rein-deer being dead, and the rest so weak as to be unable to convey the carcasses or the baggage. The former was a sad loss to the poor man, but I could only pity him. We remained for three days to recruit the rein-deer, and then determined again to make for the Omekon, and attempt the long passage with horses. The reasons which influenced us to turn back, appeared to me sufficiently strong; and as the Prince complained that he had not force sufficient to take my baggage, I was

obliged to destroy the greater part. The moment Mr. Shoumeeloff saw what I was about, he remonstrated upon the crime; asking, why I did not give the things to him, as he could take them away for himself, although he would not for me. I said I would make him a present of nearly all the baggage I had, if he would show me the way to Okotsk, by the 20th of May. He declined, and I persisted in burning my clothing and bedding, for I felt convinced he had been duping me, compelling me as he thought, to forsake my baggage, that he might reap the benefit. Finding I was not to be dissuaded, he brought forward the image of the virgin and the saint he was named after, saying that I must be a heretic and no priest of any country—he spit, swore, stamped, and crossed himself like a madman. I merely laughed at him, and although I should have had a laborious task to retrace my steps alone to the Omekon, I was determined to complete the desolation, by burning every thing I had which he would not carry, and which was not actually necessary to the season of the year. At length he told me it had been previously arranged, that I should return to the Omekon; and there in fact I re-arrived on the eighteenth day, crossing the Tourack and Boulabot rivers with much difficulty. The country over which I had lately wandered was barren, but presented some fine scenery—numerous lakes are seen, and the wood is thick and tall. It

is a favorite resort of the Tongousi, where they get fine moss for the deer, good fishing, and plenty of squirrels and foxes.

Upon leaving the Prince Shoumeeloff, I purchased a fine rein-deer of him for the last of my tobacco which I had bought at the Omekon. The deer might weigh about one hundred and fifty pounds, which I thought a sufficient quantity of meat to enable me to reach Okotsk. The Tongousian again wished to steal a march upon me, insisting that he had not sold me the skin but the meat. As I had no bed I was not disposed to be so easily outwitted, and therefore replied, that I was not obliged to kill the rein-deer until I thought proper, but that when I did he should have the skin. Poor Shoumeeloff felt much annoyed at being thus matched, especially as the knife was ready to sacrifice the poor animal, from which I however desisted to secure myself a bed.

Fresh horses having been procured for me I left for ever the Omekon; receiving from my old friend Gotossop a quarter of a young bullock, and a dead horse for the use of the Yakuti: besides a pood and a half, or sixty pounds, of rye flour, and at least ten poods, or four hundred pounds, of butter and sour milk. The first day we halted at ten miles on the banks of the Koudousou, at present a large and rapid river full of floating ice, which rendered the passage of it on the following day highly dangerous, though we had a small canoe, which served

to tow a horse over each time: as it was, the poor animal suffered much. On reaching the other side my medical skill was called into requisition. I had got the credit of curing asthma, palsy, sore eyes, and the like, and as this was done gratis, I got many patients. Had I posssessed a medical book I might probably have done some good.

From the Koudousou the country was quite overflowed for twenty miles, exhibiting numerous habitations perfectly insulated; indeed many of the people do ply about in canoes, keeping them for this case of emergency. My next route was on the right bank of the Kourounaksouta which like the other rivers in this valley unite with the Omekon. In the evening I had prepared for my supper what is termed *salamatt*, a mixture which I found very palatable. It is rye flour boiled in butter, and reduced in thickness, when boiling, to a substance like burgoo or hasty pudding, not unlike what I had eaten when going down the Volga. The two following days we got on very well, making near sixty miles over low marshy swamps; a brace of ducks were shot, and we passed the evening comfortably.

Having recrossed the Koudousou we reached the Konkuy, also uniting with the Omekon, where a chain of mountains commence, running to the south-east and south-west. Our horses began now to suffer, as the pastures are better suited for rein-deer than horses. There are hence, from the Konkuy, two roads to Okotsk, one by the west

the other by the east bank of the Okota: the former requires seven, the latter ten days to reach, without casualties. The former is over a level but continual swamp, the latter over high and rugged stony mountains. I preferred the former, though with the chance of being detained from the rapidity of the river or the quantity of loose ice, being willing to assist the poor Yakuti, as the mountain route affords only bad pasture and a worse road.

We made thirty miles along a valley bounded by high peaked mountains, in a romantic spot, and near a rapid of the Koudousou, which makes much noise. I observed a neat tomb with a cross over it to the memory of a Lamut or Tongousian prince, who had died here a few years ago, while wandering with his rein-deer.

We were now much annoyed with a considerable fall of rain, and passed a bad night in consequence. Next day there was every appearance of the rain continuing, and I reduced the allowance of meat one-half. A hurricane coming on we were obliged to halt, and were most unpleasantly off in our wet leather clothes. As soon as possible however, we resumed our journey along an elevated valley where the snow was soft and dangerously deep, presenting nothing for a fire, or for the support of the horses, nor a shrub of any description to be seen. I have scarcely ever seen a place where the horses could not by scraping with their feet reach the earth in search of food; here however the thing was

impossible, from the depth of the snow; and indeed the poor animals seemed to know it, as they would not waste their strength in the attempt. The Yakuti put on long faces at the obstructions we met with, never having witnessed such deep and difficult roads, for, in ordinary times good pasturage is to be had in this part of the valley.

The horses having to contend with such difficulties, our journey was continued on foot. My snow-shoes I gave up to one of the guides, in consideration of his being very heavy, while, for myself, with a quick motion, my weight was not sufficient to permit my sinking in the snow; in case I had, the guide with snow-shoes was near to render me assistance. We were now frequently compelled to wander about on the borders of precipices, and directing our route by the shade or appearance of the snow; habit having accustomed me as well as the people of the country, to a pretty accurate calculation whether or not the snow would bear me. I have even seen the horses refuse to proceed, their sagacity in that case being equal to man's: nor will the leading dog of a narte, if he is good, run the vehicle into a track where there is deep snow or water.

The third terrible day brought us to a solitary tree from which many horse hair offerings were suspended. Having overcome this abominable route, no less than sixty miles, in the evening we reached a fertile spot, and halted on the banks of a lake

from which, it is said, the rivers Okota and Koudousou, running in counter-directions, have their source; a circumstance which recalled to my recollection those words in an able work by Mr. Barrow upon rivers, wherein it is said that "although it is not a physical impossibility that two rivers should flow in opposite, or indeed in any direction out of the same lake, yet the contrary approaches so near to an axiom in geography, that no instance is perhaps known of such an occurrence."

We had now only one day's meat left, but were fortunate in shooting a couple of partridges which the guides brought me. We had still some rye flour, and butter, and with that hoped to cross the river without any subsequent difficulty. At four in the morning we had 13° of frost by Reaumur, and at noon 73° of heat of Fahrenheit. After forty miles of severe travelling we at length reached the river, which was to close this terrible journey, and which was full of shoals and rapids, and may be declared useless. The islands in it abound with birches, larches, and alders, as also with the poplar, and a few pines. There is an abundance of wild berries of a fine flavour; and the pastures are exceedingly rich. The scenery was, also, in many places, highly beautiful; and the river afforded a novel spectacle, being confined by the most beautiful natural quays of crystal ice, while the river actually roared from the velocity of its current.

As we continued our melancholy route we fell

in with two white bears bound to the north, but fear, probably on either side, kept us apart. Still along the Okota, we reached twenty-five miles, the horses enjoying very fine pastures, but our provisions entirely at an end. The rains had again overtaken us, and were rapidly swelling the rivers. Of the last of the rein-deer, the flesh was so far gone that I could not eat it: the Yakuti however, are so fond of putrid meat, termed in England game, for indeed it was nothing else, that they finished it, regretting only that it was so little in quantity. The second day without food, and in a torrent of rain, we made near fifty miles, the horses swimming and wading through thirty or forty little rapid streams. These are formed by the rains and the melting of the snow from the eastern range of elevated mountains: they subside and dry up about the month of September. We lost one horse which was carried by the stream into the Okota.

At length by great labour we reached the fording place at the Okota. It was, however, impossible to attempt it, the guides observing, that the horses might pass the river, but not loaded. We therefore halted, and next morning found a place where there was a canoe on the opposite bank. Thereupon unloading the horses, we turned them into the river, and they all reached the opposite bank in safety. The question then was how to get the canoe over; I was the only person who could swim, but the water was still so cold that I felt no

preference to that mode. Necessity at last compelled me, and having procured a short stout piece of drift wood, which was very buoyant, I crossed at a narrow part of the stream, with a leather thong fast to my waist. The rapidity of the stream carried me down above a hundred yards, but the Yakuti, keeping, by a sort of run, in a parallel line, were ready to haul me back, if necessary. I however, reached in safety; and, instantly throwing off my clothes, took violent exercise. The breadth of the swimming part might only have been fifteen or twenty yards, and across the strength of the stream possibly not more than four or five yards; yet I barely accomplished it. The feat was thankfully acknowledged by the astonished Yakuti, when I returned with an excellent canoe.

Lord Byron swam the Hellespont, and John Cochrane the Okota. Of the two feats, mine was surely the most difficult; his lordship was neither fatigued, hungry, nor cold, nor compelled to his undertaking; while I had each and all of those evils to contend with.

By perseverance we reached twenty miles farther, halting at one of the fishermen's summer villages. I broke open all the cellars in search of fish, but was not so fortunate as to find any.

The evening proving fine, we aired and dried our clothes in lieu of supper, and next day, over a rugged, but well wooded country, walked and rode twenty miles, encamping upon the left bank of the Modon; one solitary partridge being the day's food

for four people. The Okota here becomes formidable from the waters of the Nater and Modon, which enter it from opposite points. The former river inconvenienced us much, being obliged to ford it three times in the short space of seven miles, and with no inconsiderable risk. After the passage of the Nater we ascended an elevated and rugged mountain, from whence we enjoyed a fine view of the surrounding country, and descending entered upon a swampy over-flooded country, covered with fallen trees, which impeded our progress terribly. A desolated forest was our companion for many miles; here and there we found a few berries, especially of the moroshka (rubris chamaemorus), a yellow berry about the size of a strawberry; there were also some bilberries. We halted on an island where the remains of a post-house are to be seen. It rained during the night, and we had some heavy thunder, a sound become unusual to me.

The next day, about one mile farther, we reached the junction of the Arka and Okota, but they had swollen so much from the rains, that we were again detained. I therefore went in search of game with our Yakut's gun, but unhappily the powder, which had been kept in a rag, was so wet as to be entirely useless; we had, therefore, nothing but patience left, independent of four fat horses, which my finances would not allow me to sacrifice. The poor Yakuti would willingly have allowed it, but I could not think of permitting them, upon my account, to suffer so great a loss, and therefore determined

to let them act as for their own welfare, knowing, as I did, that none of their nation would deem it necessary to kill a good horse till his owner had been nine days without animal food.

The number of islands in the river increased to an astonishing degree the velocity of the stream in the channel, which brings down with it immense masses of ice and trees; and even had I been possessed of a canoe, or had the river been more tranquil, it appeared impossible for the horses to ascend the quays on the opposite bank, which run into the river in a shelving manner eight or ten feet out of the water. Now and then a mass of ice, or a tree would strike the quay, and tearing away the shelving part, would leave a perpendicular spot of some yards. I walked along the banks of the river in search of a place to cross, but in vain; we therefore began to fell timber, to be employed in the formation of a raft, if necessary. More rain came in the evening and we passed an unpleasant night, anxiously watching the rise or fall of the river. We had eaten nothing for two days, and only a few berries on the two preceding these. Upon the noon of the following day I had completed the raft, and as I felt extremely hungry, determined to attempt the passage of the river with one Yakut and the Cossack. The other Yakut I left with the horses, as he could not possibly perish for want for food, and appeared only anxious for the necessity which should compel him to knock one of the animals upon the head, that is that the nine days should expire.

To starve on one side of the river, be drowned in it, or die upon the other side, appeared alike to me; and I accordingly embarked our little baggage upon the raft, composed of ten logs of trees about fifteen feet long, crossed by five others, and again crossed by two more, to form a seat for the person taking charge of the baggage, which was lashed to the raft. The spars were lashed together by leather thongs, and two or three leather bags were cut up to increase their length. Each spar was also connected to the one on each side of it by three grummets formed out of the green branches of the trees on the banks of the river; and the raft appeared to me strong enough to resist a severe concussion. We also provided ourselves with drift spars formed into oars, to serve to steer, and assist in gaining the shore should an accident happen. My papers and journals were fastened round my body, and I took my station in the bow, in order that I might avoid danger, and keep in the centre of the river.

It was with difficulty we moved our vessel into the main channel, from the number of eddies; but having once reached it, we descended in a most astonishing manner, sometimes actually making the head giddy as we passed the branches of trees, rocks, or islands. No accident happening, and the river widening, I began to congratulate my companions on the probability of breakfasting the next day in Okotsk, but as yet I had not got upon the proper side of the stream, the islands and shoals perpetually turning us off. The Cossack and Ya-

kut continued in a state of alarm, not entirely without cause, for upon rounding a point of land, we observed a large tree, jutting into the river, with a tremendous and rapid surf running over it, the branches of the tree preventing the raft from passing over the body of it, which was so deep in the water as to preclude a hope of escaping with life, at least impossible to avoid being wrecked. The Cossack and Yakut crossed themselves, while I was quietly awaiting the result in the bow. We struck, and such was the force of the rebound that I was in hopes we should have been thrown outside the shaft in the subsequent approach. I was, however, disappointed, for the fore part of the raft was actually sucked under the tree, and the after part rose so high out of the water that it completely turned over, bringing the baggage under water; the whole then, with the Yakut and Cossack, proceeded down the stream, and fortunately brought up upon an island about one hundred yards below. In the mean while my situation was dangerous; being in the bow, I could not hold on the raft as my companions had been able to do, for fear of being jammed in between the raft and the tree. I therefore quitted my hold, and, with infinite difficulty, clung to the outer branches on the rapid side of the tree; my body was sucked under, and no part of me was out of the water but my head and arms. I could not long remain in such a state; and making, therefore, one vigorous effort, on the success of which it was clear my life depended, I gained the top

of the tree. I was throwing off my upper park, when the branch gave way, and I dropped down, half drowning, to the island. It was a fortunate circumstance that the raft upset, as otherwise it could not have brought up at the island; which it did in consequence of the baggage lashed to the raft being so deep in the water.

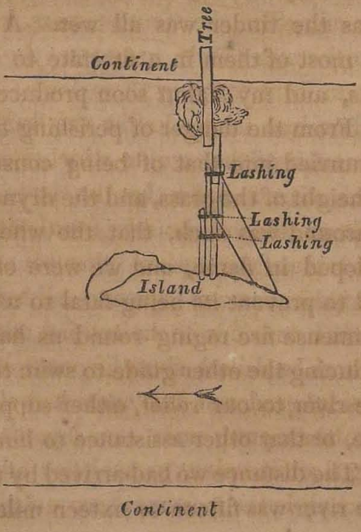
Our situation, notwithstanding, upon the island was by no means pleasant. On either side of us was a rapid channel, and I was as far as ever from accomplishing the object I had in view; which was that of getting upon the right bank of the river: for then I might expect to reach some habitation, there being none upon the left bank nearer than six hundred miles, half way to Idgiga. My first care was to change my wet clothes, and warm myself by exercise; the next was to unlash and land the baggage, and to save as much of the raft as possible, our deliverance depending upon it. By hard work we accomplished it ere the sun had set; after which it soon began to be very cold. The appearance of the night was unfavorable, as it foreboded rain: it would therefore have been highly indiscreet to remain longer than necessary, as the river might, in one night, so increase as to cover the island.

To launch a raft into the channel I could not attempt, as by that time it would be dark, and we should certainly meet with the same accident, and probably worse results. I therefore walked towards the end of the island, till I came opposite to

a large tree which had fallen from the continent nearly half way across the narrowest part of the channel, which might be about fifty or sixty feet. To swim through the central part of it was impossible; but it appeared to me probable, with the help of nautical ingenuity, to save not only ourselves, but also the baggage; and this I accomplished in a true sailor-like fashion.

The baggage and spars were first removed from the place of wreck to that we purposed departing from. These spars were, as I have said, about fifteen feet long; a length which would not more than one-third reach to the tree, allowing a proportion to be within the beach. I therefore placed the heaviest baggage in the water, consisting of four bags lashed together, to which I lashed the inner ends of two of the stoutest spars, keeping a line fast to the outer ends, to prevent the strength of the stream from carrying them down. I should say, that the place where I sunk the baggage was past the parallel of the tree, to which I desired to get five or six feet, in order that the last of the studding sail booms which I should rig out, might come on the rapid side of the tree, and thus form a bridge. I then carried out two more spars, and lashed their *centres* to the *outer* ends of the *two* first spars, while the *inner* ends were lashed to the *centre* of the two inner spars: the second two spars had also a guy fastened to their outer ends, as a support. I had now reached within eight or nine feet of the tree, a space including the most rapid part of the stream.

I accordingly sent *one* more spar, dropping it between the others in such a manner that it should fall tides way of, and two or three feet beyond, the nearest part of the tree. Of course it required no guy, and but one inner lashing, as it could not get adrift or fall to leeward, unless the tree gave way. My reason for sending one spar at last was to prevent, as much as possible, an extra surf; for as it was, I had great difficulty in reaching the tree. The Cossack followed in safety: but of course I could not expect the Yakut to attempt it; the bare idea was death to him. I therefore returned; and making another long line out of leather strips, from two bags, I flung it over to the Cossack, keeping one end fast to the island. My bridge thus appeared:

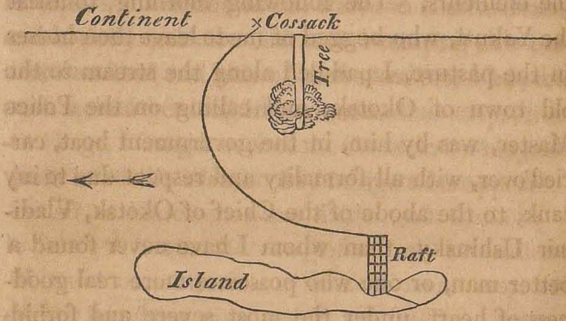


To enable me to ferry over my Yakut, the baggage, and lastly myself, I converted the bridge into a raft, which had a line fast to it from each side of the river, the Cossack hauling it to his side, and I back again. When it came to my turn, I had not the advantage of a check line, for there was no place to make it fast to. The consequence was, in rounding the tree the raft upset, and I got a severe ducking. I held on, however, and was pulled ashore in such a state, from the effects of the cold, that my clothes became like a firm casing of ice. Notwithstanding I could not but be thankful for two such escapes; the last of which, I suppose, occurred at ten o'clock at night.

We immediately had recourse to flint and steel, to produce fire, which was soon found to be impossible, as the tinder was all wet. A forest of fine trees, most of them in a fit state to burn, inspirited us, and my Yakut soon produced fire by friction. From the danger of perishing by cold, I was now hurried into that of being consumed by fire. The height of the grass, and the dryness of the wood all around was such, that the whole forest was enveloped in flame, and we were obliged to work hard to prevent its being fatal to us.

This immense fire raging round us had the effect of inducing the other guide to swim the horses across the river to our relief, either supposing we were there, or that other assistance to himself was at hand. The distance we had arrived by the winding of the river was fifteen or sixteen miles; but in

a direct line to the junction of the Arka and Okota not more than three miles; so that the fire was readily distinguished by the Yakut I had left with the horses. I therefore felt delighted with his good conduct in having so well divined our situation; and the night was passed in drying our clothes, and preparing to resume the jouney the following day. The appearance of the raft, upon the second trip, was thus:



The third day without food had now passed; and the fifth, with only a few berries to keep our spirits up, had arrived, when, on the dawn of the sixth (18th June), we again took to the horses, forded the Roonar; and passing over a mountainous and sterile country, for near forty miles, arrived at the habitation of a Yakut Prince called Gregory Grosmoff, upon an island in the Okota. My host was neither civil nor hospitable; but by a sort of force I got some horse-meat from him, and which I considered, at that time, a great delicacy, added to some bread which I procured from

the sailors and carpenters employed in felling timber for the dock-yard of Okotsk.

Fresh horses were given to me at this station, and I proceeded on to Okotsk. The route lay through some fine park-like scenery, and then over a thick sandy forest of tall pine trees ; the weather was most unfavourable, as it rained hard. I reached the eastern sea-coast, and was compelled to halt at a miserable hut, affording scarcely a shelter from the elements. The following morning, to assist the Yakuti, who begged of me to leave their horses in the pasture, I paddled along the stream to the old town of Okotsk; and calling on the Police Master, was by him, in the government boat, carried over, with all formality and respect due to my rank, to the abode of the Chief of Okotsk, Vladimir Ushinsky, than whom I have never found a better man, or one who possesses more real goodness of heart, under the most severe and forbidding countenance.

I was provided with quarters at the abode of the Police Master, whose brother had that day been drowned in floating a raft down the Okota, not far from where I was wrecked. I waited upon the Chief of Okotsk, as soon as I could put on a clean dress afforded me through the kindness of a Mr. Gardner, a Bostonian, settled in Okotsk as an agent or retail trader. The Chief felt much surprised at my haggard and miserable appearance. My face was completely frosted, and bore the ef-

fects of exposure to the wind in no ordinary degree. My long red beard, longer red locks, and almost frightful aspect, now suggested to me the propriety of shaving myself, as well as of getting my hair cut, neither of which I had permitted for fifteen months. To this measure, however, I did not consent, till I had determined, in consequence of the information I received, and the general circumstances attending my situation, to return to Europe. I did, however, shave in the forenoon, and had my hair also cut; and, receiving as a present a surtout and pair of blue trowsers, I became once more a genteel dressed man.

CHAPTER IX.

Reasons for determining to return to Europe—Description of Okotsk—Observations on the Navigation of the Amoor—Kurile Islands—St. Peter and St. Paul's—Captains Vasilieff's and Kotzebue's Expeditions.

THE circumstances which induced me to determine upon a return to Europe, previously visiting Kamtchatka, I will beg to lay before my readers, in the words of part of a letter I addressed to the same purport, to the Governor-General of Siberia. It is as follows:

"Okotsk, July 8, 1821."

"MOST EXCELLENT SIR,

"FROM the river Kolyma I had last the honour of addressing your Excellency; since when I have come over a large tract of desolate country, nearly two thousand miles, with great labour and some peril. The difficulties I have had to contend with surpass every thing of the kind I have before seen, and required every exertion of mine to conquer; which I did not do under seventy-five days of hard labour. My route lay along the Kolyma, Zysanka, Indigirka, Omekon, and Okota; all of which are, at this season of the year, large, rapid, dangerous, and almost impassable rivers. Besides these, there are numerous other streams, as well as lofty mountains of frozen snow, large overflowed marshes,

crowded and decayed forests, and half frozen lakes, which present themselves in every part of this journey: suffering at the same time cold, rain, hunger and fatigue, with forty-five nights' exposure to the snow; at times without fire in a frost of thirty degrees; and latterly five days being passed without food; never having seen an individual during four hundred miles, and but one habitation in the extent of one thousand: being frequently bewildered and lost in the snow mountains;—all these circumstances tend to weary and dispirit a traveller upon a like journey, and render him incapable of addressing your Excellency in a proper style. But I am unwilling to allow a post to escape, without communicating my past and future movements.

"I was induced to undertake the late journey, in order that I might reach Okotsk in time to proceed to America or Kamtchatka, as circumstances should render most desirable or necessary: otherwise the proper route from the Kolyma to Okotsk is viâ Yakutsk, the route of the Omekon having been discontinued thirty years, in consequence of the difficulties and perils which ever attend it.

"I waited upon the chief of Okotsk, who received me with distinguished hospitality and friendship, and who informed me that there was no vessel of any description lying in the port bound to America; and, although two vessels were expected to arrive in the course of the summer, it was by no means certain or probable that either of them would

return to the opposite continent during the same season. Such being the case, the Chief of Okotsk, agreeable to a request I made, has consented to my embarking in the Imperial transport, bound to Kamtchatka: there I purpose passing the remainder of the summer in travelling about the Peninsula, and propose to return to this place by way of Idgiga, during the early part of the winter, and thence to Europe, where I hope to arrive in the fall of the ensuing year, passing through such places in Siberia as I could not visit upon my outward journey.

"The circumstances which have arisen since my last letter to your Excellency, are such as to render useless my proceeding to America, even if a conveyance offered: but, as no opportunity does exist, I must remain a long time in Okotsk if I persist in my plan. Thus I hope that your Excellency and the Imperial Government will not feel displeased with me, in consideration of the reasons I have given, for retracing my steps, in preference to proceeding beyond the peninsula of Kamtchatka.

"Your Excellency is well aware that the object I had in view, when I undertook this long and painful journey, was first to ascertain the situation of Shelatskoi Noss, then to cross from Asia to America, at Behring's Straits, and trace the latter continent as far as possible to the north-east.

"The first problem is entirely solved by the fortunate issue of Baron Wrangel's expedition. The north-east boundary of Asia being thus established

beyond all doubt, I could no longer have any reason for remaining in the vicinity of the Kolyma, which place I accordingly quitted the moment the fair held with the Tschuktchi, upon the Anniuy, was finished.

"My original desire or intention of proceeding to America is now become as delicate as was my situation on the Kolyma, as there is a naval expedition there also, having the same object in view that I have. I can not be allowed to act with them for the reasons before assigned: I will not act against them, and, therefore, I cannot act at all. It would be madness and presumption in me, to attempt a task of the kind while an expedition is there. I cannot get to Behring's Straits but with their assistance, or that of the Tchuktchi, and thus I cannot get there at all, and can only wish for a successful termination of Captain Vassilieff's exertions. Should that officer withdraw entirely, I will hereafter undertake the same journey, and may possibly do that by good fortune which even more zeal and talents cannot execute.

"Had I known when in Europe of the expeditions on the Kolyma and in Behring's Straits, I do not think I should have taken this route to employ and improve myself. I shall, however, remember my journey with gratitude, pleasure, and pride. I confess to your Excellency that I do not see the necessity for continuing my journey merely for the sake of consistency. I am not afraid of the task,

and I am as happy in a wild desert as in a proud capital: but I conceive I can better employ myself, more improve myself, and possibly do better altogether. I have much to see and learn during the ensuing fifteen months which I shall pass in Siberia, and, therefore, I hope I am about to adopt that line of conduct which, under all the circumstances of the case, appears most proper, however much I regret the *necessity* of retracing my steps. I have the honour to be," &c.

Such were the ideas suggested to me, and such was the conduct I felt it necessary to adopt, in consequence of the conversation I had with the chief of Okotsk, and the head of the American Company, who told me that he had no idea of any vessels offering this year for the opposite continent. No other vessel could offer, as the ports of Okotsk and Kamtchatka had become shut to all strangers since I had left St. Petersburg, thus compelling me to adopt the most proper line of conduct, as will hereafter appear, upon my arrival at Kamtchatka. I will, therefore, abstain from touching any more upon that point until I reach the Peninsula, and content myself with viewing the wonders of Okotsk.

Okotsk is situated in the north-east part of a bay formed by the rivers Okota and Kouktui, and is approaching to more respect and consideration than it ever did before, owing, I believe, principally to the active and honest exertions of the present chief.

The town was formerly situated on a low sandy beach close to the sea-side. Its exposure and inconvenience were never pointed out till by the late chief, now commanding at Yakutsk, who was in consequence ordered to transfer the town from the old to the new site, which is on the left bank of the Okota, as the old one was on the right. The order for the removal has been issued several years, yet little was done till lately: even at present, the new site contains but the government buildings, and those belonging to a few of the Cossacks and sailors. The more considerable part, which are erecting by the American Company will, it is said, be transferred hither in the ensuing winter. The plan upon which the town is building is good, and when finished, will be, after Barnaoule, the neatest place in Siberia, although upon a small scale, for there are not more than fifteen or sixteen hundred people in it. The country round Okotsk is highly productive in fine timber, in consequence of which a dock-yard has been made, and some fine vessels have been built, to enable the government to transport provisions to Idgiga and Kamtchatka.

The chief of Okotsk is generally a captain of the navy of the second rank, and subject only to the orders of the Governor-general of Siberia, although the governor of Irkutsk has some power in civil cases. At present, the establishment consists of three captains and four lieutenants, with corresponding officers of all classes, and nearly six hun-

dred seamen and artificers; the allowance for maintaining and paying whom is less than two thousand pounds per ann. independent of their bread, which is about eight thousand bushels. The people are employed in building vessels and store-houses, in rigging and sailing the former, and filling the latter with flour and stores. The receiving and sending away of flour is a serious and laborious duty, and open to much abuse and pilfering. Besides these works, there is a salt concern under the charge of an officer who commands the convicts, at present ninety in number, the maintenance of whom, including provisions, clothing, and pocket-money, is about a thousand pounds per annum. These extraordinary expenses are occasioned by the allowance of double rations, in consideration of their hard work. The allowance to a convict is as follows:—Eighty pounds of rye flour for each man per month, one hundred and twenty pounds of the same flour, for each man who has a wife, and forty pounds in addition for each child, male or female. Each man is also allowed ten pounds of oatmeal, or rice, and twenty pounds of butter per month. They are also allowed two complete suits of clothing, and about twenty shillings per annum in money. Such an allowance of provisions is commendable and liberal, indeed it is so great that the poor wretches are enabled to sell one half of the bread for the purchase of tea, sugar, and meat; and of the latter, there is not so much necessity, when the superabundant quantity of fish is taken into consideration, which is

so great that I believe from twelve to fifteen hundred dogs are fed with it during the greater part of the year.

The quantity of salt made by the convicts is about two thousand five hundred poods, or one thousand six hundred bushels, which is sold alike to rich and poor, at the rate of three shillings a bushel, equal to two hundred and fifty pounds for sixteen hundred bushels; so that the salt, although a necessary, is a losing, establishment of seventy-five per cent. The liberality and consideration of the Emperor upon this head cannot, therefore, but be duly appreciated.

There are at Okotsk fifty Cossacks, whose allowance of flour is thirty poods or one thousand two hundred pounds weight per annum, and oatmeal and butter in proportion. The children have half that allowance, and widows and orphans are considered as entitled to the same, thus bringing the establishment of Okotsk to about two hundred and fifty thousand roubles, or ten thousand pounds per annum. To meet this, the yasack, or tribute paid by Yakuti and Tongousi is two thousand eight hundred and twenty-eight roubles, or less than one hundred and twenty pounds, and the duties upon imported goods amounted, in three years, to less than seven hundred pounds. These are the only sources of revenue to Okotsk, if I except that arising from the American Company, who are supposed to pay a tenth of their imports to the Crown at St. Petersburg, as also a tenth of the furs imported from

Kamtchatka, neither of which payments take place, I believe, in so correct a manner as they should.

Of the expenses of building and fitting out a transport brig of one hundred and sixty to one hundred and eighty tons, I have the account, which states it at less than two thousand pounds; the building was one half the value of the stores: and their transport from Irkutsk the other half. Upon the whole, however, the vessels are eminently strong, and worth the money. The art of ship-building has considerably improved, if I may judge from the different samples lying in Okotsk; three brigs have been built within the last three years, which ought to last at least twenty years.

Such are the official returns of Okotsk. Of the state of society little can be said, no merchants residing in it, and the chief being the only married man belonging to the navy, and but three or four, who have wives, that belong to the civil service; in short, there is very little society, and less education, although a school has been established by the present chief, which may hereafter do well, if the existing discipline be kept up. There are seventy-six boys in it, who cost nothing either to the empire or their families, being supported on the, so called, *economy money*, i. e. the money saved from the sums allowed by government for the maintenance of the equipage, which savings the present governor, much to his honor and credit, employs for the education and other benefit of the children.

Much credit is also due to the exertions of Cap-

tain Ushinsky, in having redressed many of the grievances under which the aborigines laboured, as well as the abuses in the public departments. Formerly, when an officer wanted money, he had only to go to the dock-yard, and take such things from it as he could sell to raise it; and so recently has this abuse been exercised, that an officer, high in rank, did, even in the last year, take articles to a considerable amount from one of the store-houses, not in a shy or shamefaced manner, but openly, as an act justified by habit and long usage, and not at all questionable. I can see no reason why such conduct should be practised here, as all officers receive double pay and extra provisions, besides being always considered as regular traders; indeed it has, since my return from Siberia, been sanctioned by authority, that officers in certain departments or situations may trade. The consequences will be most fatal to the poor aborigines.

The abuses under which this persecuted race have existed I shall forbear to mention. I will, however, give two samples of the manner in which an avaricious chief may make his fortune.

A Yakut applied to the orderly Cossack of the present chief, who spoke the language of the Yakuti, stating that he wished to speak to the chief in private. The poor fellow was admitted, when he beckoned the interpreter to withdraw. This, however, was impossible, as the man, who kept his hand in his breast, could not speak a word of Russian. The chief demanded what he wanted; still

he declined answering in the presence of the Cossack. At last, after many entreaties, he pulled out a paper from his bosom, and gave it to the chief, at the same time kissing his knees; and observing that he was a poor man and had never been to Okotsk before. The paper was opened and found to contain a hundred roubles, nearly five pounds. The chief demanded the purpose of the money; and by reasoning with and threatening the poor fellow, he at last got out the truth, which was,—that an old custom of the Yakuti had been established, in order to enable the chief of Okotsk to live well and support his station, that every Yakut should pay upon his first entry into Okotsk, a sort of poll tax to the chief; and that he, the Yakut, in common with the rest had now only to continue the custom, and to express his regret that he was so poor a man, as not to be able to do more. I need not say the money was returned, the man made to understand that such practices were abolished, and a message sent to the princes of the Yakuti, to say that should such conduct be again attempted with the present chief, a severe punishment would be inflicted upon the party offending. When the number of Yakuti, who annually go to Okotsk, are considered as not falling short of three or four thousand, it may be very readily guessed what the average receipts of a chief were, and might still be, upon the score of privilege and extortion.

I will mention one instance more of the prevalence of corruption in this part of the world, and

to the truth of which I can myself testify. A decent dressed woman called upon the present chief of Okotsk, with a petition, that her husband should have his fetters taken off, and be allowed a total respite from the public services, in consequence of his age and infirmities. Upon enquiry, her husband proved to be a convict, and still more, one of the very worst. The woman was desired to call again, and was then told that the chief was sorry that the conduct of her husband was such, as prevented the chief's considering it necessary that he should be excused from the public works; and that his health, his age, and circumstances were such, that no extra consideration of his case was necessary, and therefore he must continue to work in his fetters. The woman then put a letter into the hand of the chief, which, on opening was found to contain bank notes to the amount of three hundred roubles, a sum equal to fifteen pounds. This was her last resort, the money was returned, the former opinion was confirmed, and the chief for having done his duty and for having honorably refused the bribe was denounced as the most arbitrary and tyrannical, in so much that a parallel was drawn between his conduct and that of his predecessors, by whom it seems such things were practised.

These are in no way extraordinary cases, nor are they by any means the most grievous. Those arising from the oppressive acts of the commissaries or tax-gatherers, are the worst. I feel confi-

dent that no real redress can be granted until the yasack is done away with entirely; and this step I hope and believe will, ere long, be taken. The sacrifice would be small; it might even be done with great advantage to the empire, and to the increase of population, as well as of the revenue: but I have done, and am really tired of being under the necessity of telling such true tales.

During the latter part of my stay at Okotsk, two vessels arrived there from America, one of which was very valuable, worth seventy thousand pounds, the other about thirty thousand. They were brigs, and loaded with sea-otters, beavers, sea-cats, martins, river-otters, and various other less valuable skins. The vessels appeared well manned, and tolerably managed, which is more than I can believe is the case with the government transports; but as I am going in one, and shall have a fair opportunity of judging, I will, for the present, abstain from further remark. I remained in Okotsk a considerable time, about three months, and felt highly gratified with the attentions shown to me by the chief, his amiable lady, and the officers. Every thing that could tend to my comfort was done for me. I did not, however, receive from the American Company's representatives those attentions to which my situation might seem to entitle me, in consequence, I believe, of what had taken place at St. Petersburgh. *One* circumstance in particular occurred to me, which was calculated to lower them and the concern in my estimation. One of their

brigs was to be examined,—visited for the purpose of ascertaining if the provisions were good, if the people were satisfied, and if the furniture of the vessel, in spare sails, &c., was, as is directed by law. The Chief and officers were invited. This was at a feast given by the Chief, at which I was present, and, where he was requested to bring me with him: I even heard the invitation, but I naturally considered that if they really wished me to partake of the dejeuné to be given on board, they could as well have invited me upon the spot, as desire a second person to bring me. The day the survey was to take place, all the individuals expected repaired to the scene of action, except myself; a boat was despatched after me, but I declined the invitation in toto, conscious as I was that something existed which, probably, in obedience to directions, I ought not to see, and knowing as they must that I would expose, if I discovered it. I neither have nor had any hostility towards the American Company; on the contrary I say, that I think their establishment in Okotsk is upon the most liberal scale, probably too liberal, and that there are fewer faults in the concern in Okotsk, than in any other of theirs that I have seen.

The prices of provisions and labour will conclude these remarks upon Okotsk. Bread is twelve roubles a pood, and meat from four to five roubles the same quantity, that is, bread is sold by government at nine shillings for thirty-six pounds, while meat is four shillings and sixpence for the same quantity.

Fish, from its abundance, is not vended. Tobacco, cottons, and earthenware, cutlery, and such articles as a poor people can want are not exorbitant, while a common working man can earn four, five, and six shillings a day, which is, however, sure to be spent at the kabak, or grog shop. Wine of an infamous quality, the worst of spirits, and a sort of provincial naleefka, and fructovka (a spirit of the flavour of cherry-brandy) are most exorbitantly dear. Those who have industry, strength, or talent, cannot fail of making their situations comfortable in Okotsk, if they be so disposed. The place is generally considered healthy, yet for invalids there is a good hospital, with plenty of attendants. The gardens produce some vegetables, but of an inferior growth; mushrooms are most abundant, and very fine. In other respects the government of Okotsk can only be termed an immense dreary waste, extending from the river Uda to Idgiga and Anadyr, and the whole population is less than four thousand souls. In spite of the attentions and hospitality heaped upon me by the inhabitants of Okotsk, I could not regret my departure. It has such a sameness—so little to be seen—so little to interest; and what was worse than all, so much scandal circulating there, that every thing done in Irkutsk and St. Petersburgh, was sure to be known in Okotsk.

It was on the twenty-fourth of August that I embarked on board the Imperial Transport Brig, Michael, to proceed to Kamtchatka. She was com-

manded by a lieutenant of the navy, and had on board thirty-two people besides passengers; I mention the number, because it is considered in this part of the world that such a number falls far short of what is necessary to work a vessel in a case of emergency.

Our destination was St. Peter and St. Paul's in Kamtchatka, and we cast off our lashings about noon, and were soon in the centre of the tremendous tidesway, which makes in and out of Okotsk every six hours. In attempting to cross the bar she struck, and as the vessel was rather late, the ebb-tide having made, of course she continued to strike, and in fact beat so hard, that it was necessary to get down the lower yards and topmasts, and even to prepare to discharge the cargo. Every exertion, but in vain, was made in the two following tides to get her off from the bank which received Captain Billings's vessel, the Good Intent—she was left so truly dry at low water, that I walked on shore to communicate with the chief.

Upon the afternoon of the twenty-sixth, by main force we hove the brig into deep water upon the rising of the tide, and as no damage had been apparently done to the vessel, of course resumed the voyage. We may be considered as fortunate; the surf is at times so terrific as to prevent the possibility not only of a boat, but of any vessel outriding it many minutes. The shallowness of the water a long way off from the entrance of the harbour, the rapidity of the tides, and the cross-setting of them

at the harbour's mouth, preclude the possibility of Okotsk becoming an easily accessible port, except for a small merchant-vessel. Necessity alone, resulting from the loss of the Amoor, can induce the Russian Government to keep it, at such an expense and under such circumstances. If the Amoor had not been sacrificed through the bad generalship of the Count, whose name I do not recollect, or the superior duplicity of the Chinese, all the productions of the Pacific might have entered, and ascended that river nearly to the fortress of Kiakta: but with the present state of the limitation of the Chinese and Russian Empires, the produce of the Pacific is necessarily sent to Okotsk, as there is no other eligible place.

The produce arriving at Okotsk has to choose betwixt the dangers of a bad roadsted, and of a very difficult port. From Okotsk to Irkutsk and Kiakta, are near three thousand miles of the most difficult and dangerous land-carriage in the world, a journey which cannot be accomplished during the season in which the vessels generally arrive at Okotsk; consequently one year's interest of the money is sunk, besides the exposure of the goods to the ignorance and negligence of warehouse-keepers, and the dampness of the atmosphere.

The only period in which the port of Okotsk can be approached or departed from, is between the months of July and October, or only four months. The general period for vessels arriving is the latter part of July or beginning of August, too late in

the season to admit of their cargoes being forwarded to Yakutsk in time to take the winter-road and reach the fair of Kiakta during the same season, as the fair commences in February. Were the American Company to despatch their vessels from the Continent of America, in the month of May, they would always arrive at Okotsk before the 1st July; their cargoes might be transported to Yakutsk by the end of August, at a cheap rate by means of the return horses, and then to Irkutsk by water, previous to the winter setting in, and so be ready for disposal at Kiakta in January. The furs would arrive in a better state, and of course fetch a better price. What incalculable advantages would result to the American Company and to merchants in general, to say nothing of its convenience to the government, from the employ of steam-engines upon the rivers Lena, Angara, Selenga, and Baikal Lake? What country in the world has such advantages for the employment of steam as Siberia: and what a relief would it not give to the aborigines in saving them at least *fifty thousand* horses every year, which are now, through fatigue, cold, hunger, and being overladen, left to perish?

The value of the Amoor is, however, so generally known, and its loss so sensibly felt, that it were needless to point out the benefits which would arise from the purchase of it; all that surprises me is, that the Russians have not attempted to open a treaty even for the privilege of navigating the river: then the direct trade between Irkutsk

and Kamtchatka, Japan and the Pacific in general would be astonishing, while now it is at best contemptible.

To return to the voyage, which occupied us fourteen days, with mild and favourable weather and but little fog. On the seventh day wepassed the Kurile Islands in safety, and on the tenth made the Avatcha Peak. Strong north winds and a still stronger and perpetual south-east current, together with the want of practical knowledge in the commanders of vessels in this part of the world, retarded our progress, so that we did not anchor until the fifteenth day, when I was received under the roof of the amiable and hospitable chief, Captain Rikord; the gentleman, as will be remembered, who rescued Captain Golovnin from the hands of the Japanese. I arrived in time to partake of the feast, given in honour of the Saint after whom the lady of the chief is named. It was attended by all the youth, beauty, and fashion of the town of St. Peter and St. Paul's.

During our passsage across the sea, little of interest was excited. I had occasion during calm weather to witness the struggles of the whale, and listen to its groans when attacked by the kasatki, a species of sword fish. I had also an opportunity of establishing the latitude of Povorotnoi Noss, and which is correctly laid down in the old chart of Admiral Saretcheff's, while the more modern one of Admiral Kruzenstern is incorrect by nineteen miles. The longitude of Nishney Kolymsk, of Okotsk and of the

island of Eon, have however 3° of error in the former Admiral's chart; this may probably have proceeded from inadvertency and not from error of calculation, as Captain Billings used English books to calculate by, while Saretcheff must have used French. The former only understood his own English, and of course used the meridian of London; the latter most likely used the meridian of Paris, as he did not understand English. I mention the circumstance of exculpation, because the errors are known to exist. In passing the Kurile Islands, the general line of them appeared to be well laid down, with the exception of the second and fourth islands. which, with Cape Lopatka, should be placed farther to the east, to bring them upon a north-east line with the islands to the southward of them; or, the southern islands should be placed more to the westward to bring them upon a south-east line from Cape Lopatka, for that is their exact direction, although the charts lay them down otherwise. I had no other means than half a dozen compasses, of ascertaining where the fault lies. The islands and peninsula are elevated, bold and very accessible; passages may be run for during the night in spite of the fogs, and there is no danger any where but in the Lopatka channel, where a strong south-east current always sets. The average temperature of the atmosphere was 15° of heat.

In St. Peter and St. Paul's, I found the Russian expedition under the orders of Captain Vassilieff,

who had returned from a fruitless attempt to get round the American Continent. They rounded Icy Cape about thirty miles beyond Capt. Cook, although they fell short of him on the Asiatic side by two degrees. Little increase of knowledge will be gained to the world by this expedition; the most valuable is the having ascertained that a strong current runs round Icy Cape to the north-east and east, so strong, that it was with great difficulty that Captain Vassilieff could get back his fast sailing sloop! She certainly was not provided with the means, nor was she a fit vessel for wintering on the American coast, separated from her consort, a large transport of six hundred tons. What would Captain Parry have given for such a *fair current?* Had the state of Captain Vassilieff's ship permitted his running for the accomplishment of the voyage in general, he certainly had the fairest opportunity that ever man had, for the result of Captain Parry's first voyage was known at Kamtchatka, as a correct chart of that voyage, and the situation of Melville Island, had been forwarded, and had actually reached there a few days after Captain Vassilieff arrived. Little or no doubt can exist that he could have reached Melville Island; that there was an open sea to the east, and a current of three knots per hour, I have reason to know. Unfortunately, however, the expedition was not in a fit state to make the attempt again; but what may be done by Captain

Kotzebue, time alone will show, although I am free to think that the passage by Behring's Straits is the best.

Should Captain Kotzebue be determined to attempt the passage round Icy Cape, he will, no doubt, find a place for wintering; or he may winter in the sound called after, and re-discovered by him, for it has been known to the Russians more than one hundred years. The winter may be employed to great advantage, as there are natives in the vicinity, with dogs and rein-deer; and I should think, that with proper caution, and people qualified for the task, the coast as far as M'Kenzies river might be surveyed in one winter. Dogs to assist could also be procured at Kamtchatka.

I found also in St. Peter and St. Paul's, a brig under Portuguese colours, as well as one from the Sandwich Islands. The former brought a cargo of flour from Macao, the other a cargo of salt as a present to the Emperor, from the sable majesty of those islands, and in return received as a present, such things as seemed most desirable; among others, some animals, with a view of propagating the breed; though it may be doubted whether the propagation of bears will be beneficial or acceptable. The Sandwich brig was a fine American vessel, officered by three Englishmen, and entirely manned by natives. The conduct of the Executive here towards the Sandwichers was flattering; and it is not a little singular that the first voyage

undertaken by them should be to Kamtchatka. What with the expedition, transports and foreigners, this place had at one time, so many as eight vessels in it;—the largest number she ever counted before.

It may readily be believed that I felt great pleasure in meeting with three Englishmen, independent of three on board of the Sandwich vessel, in such a distant part of the world. One was the Russian Consul-general to the Pacific Ocean, residing in Manilla, whither he had returned after escaping the dreadful massacre in that place. I found him, during the long stay I had in Kamtchatka, a polite, hospitable, and finished gentleman, a sincere friend, and in short a *real Irishman.* A second was a plain good honest Bostonian, encumbered with six children and a wife, else a man who ought to return to his native land, where his circumstances are good: I experienced much civility and kindness from him. The last was, a Cockney, who had been exiled from Moscow for forgery; and, although he had been flogged, knouted, &c. was still well received in every house. I know not how such things are managed in this country, but no doubt can exist that in Siberia, and probably in Botany Bay, the convicts are well received, that is, if their situation in life was formerly respectable. For my own part, I could only pity him, and rejoice that the punishment inflicted was

so merciful; had he been a Russian the case would have been different.

Time rolled away in the agreeable society of the Chief and his amiable lady, together with the very fine young men who composed the officers belonging to the expedition and to the port. I felt anxious to get away from the perpetual course of balls, routes, dinners and masquerades, as also from the net into which I felt myself drawn. But, however much the Chief felt inclined to grant me the means of departing, it was impossible until the expedition had quitted the bay: only one post could be sent, and that I desired to accompany. Two months passed in this manner before the expedition departed, when I was left to the free enjoyment of a passion which was crowned with the reward of marriage;—so much then for my travellership. However, I had no alternative, and the day that Captain Vassilieff left the harbour of St. Peter and St. Paul's I put the question. My airy phantoms, my bold desires, and my eccentric turn being thus dissipated by one woman, I prepared to make a tour of the peninsula, before I led my intended bride to the altar.

CHAPTER X.

Departure from St. Peter and St. Paul's—Avatcha—Koraki—Nachiekin—Apachinsk—Bolcheretzk—Utka Ostrog—Kolpakofskoi—Tchinsk—Kavaranskoi—Napanas—Tygil—Sedanka—Yelofka—Xarchina—Kamenoy Ostrog—Kamakee—Nishney Kamtchatsk—Cloochee—Krestrova Ostrog—Kozerofsky—Massurah—Kirgannick—Milkovah—Verchney Kamtchatka--Schegatchick--Sherom—Pushcheen—Ganal—Malka—Return to St. Peter and St. Paul's.

All being prepared for me, I quitted the port of St. Peter and St. Paul's accompanied by seventeen nartes, driven by the officers and principal inhabitants, and for two miles by the ladies, one of them at parting imprinting upon me a kiss,

Speaking silence, dumb confession,
Passion's birth, and infant's play,
Dove-like fondness, chaste concession,
Glowing dawn of brighter day!

It was not long before I reached Avatcha, where I found all the officers awaiting me, with tea and other refreshments. The distance we had come is eight miles, along the beach, and over a few little hillocks covered with some stunted birch. At eight in the evening of the 20th November, O.S. I proceeded upon my journey with a Cossack and four nartes; not that such a number were necessary to stow away *my* baggage, for it would not even fill the portmanteau of Sterne's Sentimental Traveller,

although my pantaloons were of leather, while his were of silk, and consequently more easy to be stowed away.

From Avatcha the path lies along the river of its own name, which impeded our progress, and was otherwise unpleasant to me, in wetting me a good deal. The scenery was very dull, and I was so ob-sorbed in contemplation that I could hardly see the right side of any thing. At midnight I reached the Ostrog of Koraki, forty miles from the port, where are a few fishing hamlets in tolerable condition. At one of them I fell in with an old shipmate who had come in the same transport from Okotsk. He had departed from the port three days before me, but a too frequent use of brandy had induced the Kamtchatdales to deny him dogs, in hopes of getting a portion of it.

The Cossack did not arrive at the halting place until eight in the morning, and then in such a state as to render him a fit companion for my old shipmate. By noon, however, I got away and proceeded towards Nachiekin, thirty miles. The country was so deep in snow that it was midnight before we arrived. We passed numerous half-frozen streams, the dogs suffering a good deal, and whenever I walked to relieve them, I was sure of having my feet severely wetted. At Nachiekin I had to combat with a drunken postillion, bad dogs, a saucy Toion, and my old friend, who much annoyed me. Patience was my only resource for some hours, af-

ter which, on a beautiful frosty moon-light morning, I resumed the journey over a picturesque and mountainous country, well wooded and watered. Late at night we reached a small place called Apachinsk, forty-five miles. Ere we arrived we had to cross the river called Bolshaya in a canoe, the river not being frozen, a circumstance at this time of the year very rarely known. Thirty miles farther we reached the ancient capital of Kamtchatka, Bolcheretzk, now a small village containing fourteen dwellings, one hundred and sixteen inhabitants, and about thirty balagans, i. e. sheds for drying fish. The path to it was over a flat level along the river. I was myself the driver towards the abode of my now father-in-law, whose homely manners, numerous, healthy, smiling children, and hearty breakfast, made ample amends for the fatigues of the last two days.

Bolcheretzk stands on the river of its own name, about fifteen miles from the sea of Okotsk, and has little to boast of at present but the affectionate remembrance the inhabitants bear to the memory of Major Behm, so highly spoken of by Captain King. I heard, also, strange stories of the celebrated Benjofsky, who made his escape hence to Canton, having previously murdered some people, and fomented an insurrection. I heard nothing in his favour, although an old lady, afterwards my aunt, was a companion of his. I found Bolcheretzk to be inhabited by a civil people, all Russians: but were it otherwise it might be expected I should

speak highly of it, as the first place where my wife saw the light of day.

I could not fail of being a welcome guest at such a place, where neither tobacco, tea, nor spirits had been tasted for the last three months by any individual. Of course I left a small quantity of each article with my friends, making them, as it were, roll in luxuries, in return for which I received several sables and foxes as presents. The state of the river was such as to prevent my proceeding upon my journey in less than two days, which period I passed very happily, wandering over the extensive site of this ancient place; it is said to have formerly contained to the number of five hundred inhabitants, which have been reduced partly by the removal of the seat of government, and partly by disease.

Canoes being provided, I resumed my journey in a heavy fall of snow, and crossing three branches of the river entered upon a trackless maze of snow six and eight feet deep; so difficult to pass, that it was three o'clock the following morning before I reached Utka Ostrog, having been twenty hours in going fifteen miles. The route was along the sea coast, having far to the right an elevated range of mountains. Three miserable dwellings in an exposed situation, but with fine meadow lands, and plenty of game and fish, are all it can boast of. The chief was absent, hunting, and as I could not procure fresh dogs, I remained six hours to rest

those I had, and then proceeded upon my journey, reaching by midnight Kickchick, twenty miles, a place of equal wretchedness with the last, and like it containing but fourteen or fifteen inhabitants, most of whom are disabled from work by disease. With the same dogs I reached Kolofsky ostrog thirty miles along the sea coast, upon which a tremendous surf was roaring with a strong northwest wind. There are in the neighbourhood several fine lakes which never freeze, and produce trout and salmon peal of a fine flavour during the whole of the winter. Deer, mountain sheep, and game of every description that is found in the Peninsula abound in the mountains and forests, and fine meadow lands every where skirt the coast.

I remained to take tea with the old Toion, whom I found to be a fiddler and a scholar, and departed for Vorofskoy ostrog, forty miles. The mountains now approached nearer to the sea-coast, and present some beautiful scenery. I put up at the abode of a wealthy Russian farmer, and felt highly gratified in observing a small but fat herd of cattle. This is considered a rich spot, yet it contains only nine dwellings with about forty inhabitants, not enough to keep up the chase. The place is prettily situated on the Vorofskaya river, about four miles from the sea. There is a snug harbour at the mouth of the river, where the transports from Okotsk formerly visited, and the river is navigable to the village which retains the vestiges of a small fortress. The meadow lands about it are at once

extensive and luxuriant. The inhabitants provided me with frozen fish, a delicacy I had so much enjoyed on the Kolyma, with ducks and rein-deer meat, as also with dogs to resume the journey, which carried me to Kolpakofskoi ostrog, thirty miles, along a dreary sea beach. The village contains six dwellings and twenty people, who furnished me with dogs to Kroutogorova thirty miles further, a beautiful situation near the extremity of the almost level plane reaching from hence to Bolcheretzk. The famous Sopka, i. e. burning mountain, near Tchinsk, here becomes visible, and although the country is so rich, not a head of cattle is to be met with from Vorofskaya.

To Tchinsk are thirty miles of superior country, yet so deep in snow that we were obliged to take it by turns to go a head with snow shoes, at other times the government of a narte was thrown upon me, which I at first made but a bungling hand of. Tchinsk has twelve dwellings, it is consequently a considerable place! there are also two priests, brothers, whom I found drinking a decoction of dried herb instead of tea. I felt angry with the Toion who had let slip eight dogs intended for me, and declined entering his dwelling, the strongest mark of displeasure which can be shown to these simple people. The poor fellow felt the slight so severely as he saw me entering another yourte, that I could not help regretting the determination I had made. To Soposhna it is thirty-five miles, which I travelled in company with the

reverend pedlers, for every body here is a merchant. I made them happy by a pound of tea, a few pounds of tobacco, and a bottle of spirits. The road was very fine and the weather had much increased in cold, so much so, that the thermometer stood at 25°, which I had never before seen in Kamtchatka above 18°. Thence to Morososhna, thirty miles of a good road. The last named village may be termed large, containing eighteen dwellings and a hundred inhabitants, in the enjoyment of many luxuries, yet without cattle. Thence the road lay along the foot of the mountains, the scenery of which gives a relief to the eye as it is in general uninteresting all the way to Bolcheretzk, except at a few places. Upon the road to Belagolofsk ostrog, thirty-five miles, I got twice upset into the river without the means of drying or changing my clothes, and suffered much, in consequence, in my feet. I had a fine view of the magnificent Ichinskaya Sopka or mountain, which continued visible until I reached Khariuzova forty miles, the road to which is in general good, though there are some parts dangerous in the night time. The ice from the rapidity of the current, frequently sunk under us, but from our velocity of movement no accident happened.

At midnight I continued on for Kovranskoy ostrog, twenty-two miles. There is here a law obliging the Toions to have a path made within twenty-four hours after every snow storm. Our chief had failed in his duty in this particular, and conse-

quently was obliged to go before upon his snow shoes; and such was his diligence from fear of reprehension, that he not only arrived before me, but arrived in five hours, a very short time to accomplish such a journey upon snow shoes. I found it the most miserable place I had seen for a long period, reminding me of Zashiversk in northern Siberia. The brows of the hills are covered with brush wood, with little other appearance of nature. From hence to Uskolofskoy ostrog are thirty-five miles, which I was obliged to do by walking and alternately driving a narte, and cannot say which of the two is the most fatiguing. The diseases prevalent in the place prevented almost any assistance being rendered us. There are no cattle, yet fine meadow lands. Fish and game are abundant. At this place I met with another old shipmate in the person of the brandy contractor, who accompanied me to the next station, Napanas, a village with six dwellings and forty people. The road leading to it is considered dangerous, owing to a large toondra or swampy desert which must be crossed ; the distance is forty miles. We passed the desert in a slight fall of snow, which had not been sufficient to obliterate the marks of the track, else we must have been compelled to halt whenever the snow overtook us. I did not arrive until two o'clock in the morning, having been previously hurled down a snowy declivity of one hundred feet in depth : at the bottom of which, I, guide, dogs and narte all lay huddled together ; however vexed I felt inclined to

be, I could not help laughing. The guide could hardly have intended a performance of the kind, which might have caused serious consequences; it is true, he was a little in liquor, but that was my fault rather than his.

The velocity and facility with which we had descended the declivity, was more than equalled by the difficulty we had in ascending from it. To drag me and the narte from the abyss required all the dogs of the other vehicles, as well as the help of all the drivers, yet we succeeded at length; when upon replacing the baggage, my pocket-book, containing passports and other papers relative to my journey were missing; this, though perhaps an imaginary evil would have been severely felt by me. For a long time we searched in vain, turning up the snow, and at last I gave them up for lost. Such a loss never did, nor probably ever will happen to any other person: the papers which formed its contents are not likely to be again granted. The poor guide was the picture of despair, and vowed to do penance if he could only recover them, which at last was effected through the exertions of the brandy chief. We arrived thence all well, and fared heartily. Napanas contains eight dwellings and an excellent Toion, who induced the people under his command to show me the national dance. The poor fellows willingly obliged me, showing the improvements they have made upon the practice of bears, or rather, perhaps, on that of goats. The dance consists in a variety of distortions of features

and limbs, all doubtless derived from the ridiculous and wanton customs of their ancestors. The dance of the Cossacks is equally bad if not worse, yet I have seen it often practised in Yakutsk by females who should have known better. The woman, who is the principal performer, commences the dance with a handkerchief extended by the hands, somewhat like our own shawl dances; now used to hide her face from one, then from another, but always with the object of singling out him whom she most prefers as her partner. In a most unbecoming posture she approaches the favourite from the centre of the room; now dropping her head with a pensive air alternately upon each breast or shoulder, while her hands are employed in committing outrages upon decorum. The man, having taken hold of the handkerchief, joins the dance; the woman now reluctantly affecting to quit, appears again as anxious to rejoin him; this sort of antic motion is continued, till at length the woman sinks as from fatigue upon her knees, and in the act of falling is dexterously recovered by the man; and thus the dance closes. The agility and imitative powers of these wild Asiatics are really surprising, and I make no doubt that were they to have an opportunity of seeing the modern improvement in the art of dancing, as *exhibited* now-a-days in various public theatres, they would be found capable of imitating, not only *bears* and *goats*, but *geese* also.

From Napanas I proceeded down the river of its own name to its junction with the Tygilsk, hav-

ing previously sent the Cossack with the post, and my baggage straight on to the fortress. I reached the haven, where the brig Paul was laid up in the ice, with her lower rigging over the mast-head, I suppose to become frost bitten. She belongs to the government, and makes *one voyage annually to Okotsk* with bread, stores, &c. carrying back the furs which have been collected. A brig of one hundred and twenty tons is thus kept in commission to carry bread for a few people a distance of three hundred miles. Its commander, officers, and about twenty-five people paid and fed the whole year! I never knew a more shameful instance of inconsiderateness on the part of the officers of any place, in any country. This brig on an average is not more than fifteen days at sea in the course of the year, and ought if proper exertions were made, and proper encouragement given, to supply Idgiga, Tygil, and Yamsk with provisions; instead of which each of these places keeps a similar vessel. Tolerably good barracks and store houses have been built by the steersman, or commander, who has charge of the brig. The distance of the haven to the sea is ten miles, and below the fortress twenty, which last place I reached in time to dine with its commander, a lieutenant of the imperial navy, a young man who had held the situation near five years, but who will now shortly leave it, that being the period allotted for his continuation in service.

Tygil stands on the river of its own name, at thirty miles from the sea. The country round it has somewhat of the picturesque during the summer, but its situation in winter is exposed and dreary. A range of mountains from the NE to the SE defend it in some degree from the coldest winds, yet it is on the whole but a poor place. There are at present twenty-seven dwellings and two hundred and fifty inhabitants, and it is denominated a fortress; formerly it may actually have been one, but at present will be best appreciated as to its strength by a reference to George's Travels in Siberia, who, speaking of fortresses or ostrogs, the latter word comprehending Siberian fortresses, says, "It would be dangerous to attempt storming them, for whoever wanted to mount the greatest and only bulwark, a wooden paling, would most probably come to the ground with the whole structure about him." Such I am certain is the present state of Tygil, and which, with its half dozen Cossacks, can only be held *in terrorem* over the neighbouring Koriaks: the Kamtchatdales are not a people numerically or physically strong enough to create a disturbance.

The inhabitants of Tygil are all Russians, they have of late got a church and the walls of an hospital erected; when they are to be covered in I know not, though shortly I hope, for they are much wanted. The ravages of a certain disease at this place are indeed dreadful, and I should think ought to call forth the attention of the govern-

ment so far as to induce them to export doctors to, and import priests from Kamtchatka. I mean no disrespect to those reverend gentlemen, but just to hint, as my opinion, that instead of the soul only, it would be better to take care of the soul and body at the same time. The average number of people annually admitted to the hospital books is three hundred and fifty, nearly twice its whole population, who are chiefly employed in fishing and trading with the neighbouring Koriaks or Kamtchatdales. The place also serves to keep up the winter communication with Okotsk. For the Koriaks will not furnish rein-deer or dogs to carry the post, unless they are remunerated by a present of tobacco, spirits, &c.

From what I have seen of the Koriaks, both in Tygil and in their encampments to the southward, I have no doubt of their being of the same tribe as the Tchuktchi; they have the same features, manners, and customs, and the same language—the same love of independence, and are, in truth, less scrupulous of giving offence to the Russians than their northern neighbours, for they frequently break out in hostility with the inhabitants of Tygil, unless a supply of spirits and tobacco is sent to them, for which, however, they barter rein-deer and furs.

The climate of Tygil is cold; already had the thermometer passed 28° of Reaumur. The Cossacks however, contrive to raise a few vegetables, as po-

tatoes, cabbages, turnips and radishes; but the two former never arrive at complete maturity, the one being waxy, and the other without a head. The famous antiscorbutic cheremsha, or wild garlick, abounds, as does a small but delicious root, somewhat resembling a sweet potatoe, called, in the language of the country, kimtchiga. There is also an abundance of wild berries in the neighbourhood of Tygil, yet their chief support is fish and rein-deer, of both which I partook at the hospitable table of the commander of the fortress. At the expiration of four days I departed, having remained so long to recover my feet, which had been severely frost-bitten from wet.

I was accompanied by the commander of the transport lying in the Haven: he was what is termed a good, though a droll, fellow; and I was gratified with his society. Our route lay at first up the Tygil, which from its source to near the town runs through an interesting country. At midnight we reached Sedanka, a small village, containing six dwellings. From thence to Bolcheretzk is called the Tygil coast, which, generally speaking, is low and flat, the sea-coast being from thirty to forty miles from the mountains. The villages through which I had come were all of them upon the banks of some small streams, which, in most cases, rise in the mountains; but sometimes they emanate from the lakes, which are numerous. The rivers I do not apprehend to be

more than the melting of snow and rain which descend from the eternally snow-clad peaks. The quantity of horned cattle upon the coast is so small as not to merit notice, although the pastures are extensive and fertile enough to feed millions.

At Sedanka we procured dogs to enable us to cross the mountains to the next station, a distance of one hundred miles. Early in the morning we passed the camp of the Koriaks, and continued our route along the Sedanka river for forty miles, when we reached the Rasoshna. We encamped for the night in the snow, the dogs round us, and then the fire; we passed on the whole, a pleasant night, although my feet were still in a bad state, owing probably to their late want of pedestrian exercise. The following day we crossed numerous elevated lakes, and then over mountains and a well wooded country. On our way we fell in with a caravan of eleven nartes from the town of Cliutchi bound to Tygil. We continued until we reached an elevated desert of ten miles long, which we crossed in a continual storm of wind and snow, called in this country *purga ;* we halted in a miserable place, having come about thirty miles. I can hardly imagine how the poor dogs found their way, or how they managed to drag us along. There are times when these *purgas* are so tremendous that mountains of snow are levelled, immense valleys filled, whirlpools formed of snow, not only stopping the further progress of the traveller, but absolutely burying him

and his dogs: nothing can exceed the devastation, or be compared to it, but the effects of the wind on sandy deserts or mountains. I have known instances of people detained for twenty and thirty days in this tremendous pass, and it is seldom that it is crossed without a gale. And yet all this difficulty and danger might be obviated simply by the erection of crosses or mounts, as in the northern parts of Siberia, where I have seen in the distance of thirty or forty miles, a small mound of earth, with a white and black chequered cross placed at every one hundred and fifty yards.

The night was exceedingly cold, and the snow and wind prevented our even enjoying the luxury of a cup of tea, for no fire could be lighted. Crossing a second toundra, desert, of seven miles wide, with infinite labour to the dogs as well as ourselves, we entered upon a most magnificent country. Lofty, straight, and stout firs lined the right of the valley, while the dwarfish larch, and alder, mixed with birch, stood upon the left in all their bandied and crooked shapes. The contrast was extremely pleasing as we glided along the milky valleys at a rapid rate. Immediately upon clearing the desert the snow and wind ceased, and we hailed the return of fine cold weather. Not long after we overtook a caravan of nartes in great distress, having been detained ten days in the mountains by the weather. The dogs had been without food for three days, and were evidently in the last stage. In the early

part of the evening we reached the Yelofka river, which unites not far hence with the Kamtchatka, running in a picturesque manner through the country. At seven we reached the ostrog of Yelofka, fortunate in having crossed the mountains so safely.

Yelofka is a pleasant village of eight dwellings and forty-six people, the country round it is elevated and well wooded. We remained only a few hours to refresh ourselves, and then continued the journey along the river of its own name, the banks of which afford some beautiful scenery for about fifteen miles. We then came to a desert which we crossed in a purga, fortunately not very heavy. At forty miles we reached the village of Khartchina of five dwellings and thirty inhabitants. I was welcomed to it by a respectable looking old man, a priest, son to the highly eulogized priest of Paratounka. The son perfectly well remembered Captains Cook and Clerk; he having been at that time a young man, living with his father at the village of Paratounka. Several uninteresting anecdotes were related of them, as also of Perouse, in their rambles of shooting or chasing the wild animals. I had at Yakutsk been recalled to the remembrance of Captain Cook by a silver watch, which now belongs to Captain Minitsky, of the Russian navy, and which, I think, is spoken of somewhere as having been given away by that great navigator to some individual merchant. He probably disposed of it, and thus at last it has fallen into the hands of the pre-

sent holder, who, though I feel assured he appreciates it highly, yet would not retain it, should relations, or others more nearly concerned, express a desire to be possessed of so valuable a memorial.

From Kharchina the route lies over a large lake, and thence over a fine open country, abounding with some of the finest fir-trees I have ever seen, reaching to the height of sixty and eighty feet. At twenty miles we reached the ostrog of Kamennoy, on the right bank of the Kamtchatka, and, changing dogs, proceeded twelve miles farther to Kamakie over numerous lakes near the river. The country here abounds with red foxes, and is certainly one of the most picturesque parts of the Peninsula: the beautiful view of the Sopka, or Peak of Cliuchie, was hid in the clouds. I movedon to wards Nishney Kamtchatsk, also an antient capital in the Peninsula, a far more eligible place than the present site. The weather had now become very mild, no less than 3° of heat of Reaumur. We made good about seven miles of our journey through very deep snow by the ensuing morning. For three hours we did not move forward more than one mile, a heavy fall of snow had taken place, and it was found impossible to proceed, owing to the extraordinary heat of the weather. No track nor scent offered to the dogs, otherwise I would have persisted in the prosecution of myjourney. The drivers, however, with snow shoes actually sunk eighteen inches deep in the snow, and I was therefore com-

pelled to return. We soon regained the ostrog we had left, and there we passed the night, witnessing such a scene of riot and drunkenness as is quite beyond my pen to describe. My companion had parted with a few bottles of spirits unadulterated, which, when they had operated, induced him again to launch out adulterated spirits, receiving, of course, a sable for each bottle. I was thoroughly convinced from this circumstance that Kamtchatka should not be supplied with spirits.

I was mortified at not visiting the town of Nishney Kamtchatsk, and its port, but may say that the former contains twenty-two dwellings, and one hundred and fifty inhabitants, and the latter an accessible port, but much feared for want of being frequented. Formerly, when the seat of government was held there, vessels annually went to St. Peter and St. Paul's for provisions, but this is now no longer the case. Timber abounds in such quantities and of such a quality as should induce the government to fell and to export it to the present capital, where it is much wanted. I reached Cliuchie at midnight, having come over a few lakes and a half frozen river. Cliuchie is a Russian peasants' village, containing one hundred and eighty inhabitants. It is pleasantly situated upon the right bank of the Kamtchatka, at the foot of the eastern termination of the lofty peak which is not far from it. This peak is said to be the most elevated in the peninsula, being about fifteen thousand

feet above the level of the sea. It has frequently emitted flames, lava, and dust, but its summit was not visible during my stay in this respectable village of Christians. After the grand eruption which I had witnessed in the Island of St. Vincent's, in 1812, I could feel no regret at not being able to see one in Kamtchatka. It is true that little or no mischief arises from the volcanoes of this Peninsula, and they may therefore be more innocently and placidly seen and contemplated.

The amount of tribute paid by the peasants is about ten shillings, formerly it was twenty; being reduced one half at the time the Kamtchatdale yasack was reduced from two to one sable. The country is in every respect most luxuriant and beautiful, and were there a sufficiency of inhabitants, as well as of horned cattle, it would no doubt make one of the most desirable abodes in the world. Wood of the first growth, fish in a most abundant quantity, game of the finest flavour, and of various species, pastures inconsumable; a chase which yields foxes, sables, river-otters, bears, wolves, &c. of the finest specimens, are what Cliuchie has to boast. Vegetables are raised with greater facility than in any other part of the peninsula. Wild berries are very abundant, and some little rye flour is produced, though not of so ripe a quality as to be of much use; such are, in short, the claims of Cliuchie, that it should undoubtedly be made the capital of the peninsula, and I am only astonished

it is not so, considering how well its central situation is adapted for that purpose. A neat church has lately been erected at the expense of the inhabitants, who are in general disliked by the chiefs and officers, owing to their resisting the payment of individual yasack, or presents. This is surely an enhancement of their character.

I quitted the village of Cliuchie perfectly satisfied with the character and conduct of its inhabitants. They preserve a great tenaciousness of their rights, and detestation of the injustice shown to their neighbours, the aborigines. To prove this assertion, I need but mention that with these Cliuchie peasants, I was obliged to pay in money for the hire of the dogs which drew me; a circumstance which had happened to me no where else, and therefore carries the most undoubted proof of exactions, extortions, and cruelty exercised upon the most innocent and inoffensive people in the world. My route lay from Cliuchie at first over some small lakes, and then along the banks of the Kamtchatka, which at this period of the year, 14th December, O. S. is but half frozen. At twenty-five miles I reached the ostrog called Krestova, having three yourtes and twenty-four inhabitants, nearly all of whom are confined by disease. I continued on with the same dogs to Oushkielova, thirty miles farther, having four habitations and twenty individuals, most of whom also are debilitated: indeed it is extraordinary what

havoc the introduction of the small pox, and another distemper, made at the ostrogs on the banks of the Kamtchatka. Remarkably fine and extensive meadow lands, attend the traveller all the way from Cliuchie to Kozerofsky, as well as noble forests of timber; and there are seasons when cattle might maintain themselves during the whole of the winter, the snow being then of no great depth; yet there are but few heads of these necessary animals. The scenery to the southward along the banks of the river, is also of the most picturesque and sublime appearance. The magnificent peak soaring to the clouds has a fine effect when viewed from the bed of the river.

Kozerofsky, forty miles beyond Oushkielova, contains five dwellings and thirty-six people, and is pleasantly situated. I continued along the river Kamchatka for twelve miles, and then along that of the Tolbachinsk to an ostrog of the same name for thirty miles more. The latter part of the journey was through a crowded forest, and a thick fog, which occasioned me some serious blows, as the dogs made their rapid progress; now and then starting at the scent of a fox or sable. Tolbachinsk is a pretty little village with thirty inhabitants, and appears to be on the improvement; the establishment is a new one and almost secluded from the world. Stchappinat was the next village I came to. It is upon the Kamtchatka, at a deep and narrow part of the river which was not yet frozen

enough to bear the nartes. I crossed two other small rivers by bridges for that reason. The scenery was very beautiful, a lofty range of mountains lay to the east with a good deal of fine timber, while the flat country is one fine uninterrupted meadow, without a single cow to feed upon it. Stchappinat has seven dwellings and fifty-two inhabitants, and, it is said, the finest fish in the peninsula, though but few are actually procured from it: they are considered so delicious that the inhabitants send them to the seat of government as presents to the chief and officers. The causes of their comparative scarcity are probably the depth and rapidity of the river, as well as the smallness of the nets; for unless the river be actually swarming with fish, it is seldom that the inhabitants can provide themselves with a sufficient supply.

To Massura are forty miles of a well wooded country, and fine meadows upon the banks of the river. I almost flew the distance, being scarcely six hours in performing it. There are ten dwellings and sixty people, civil and hospitable to a proverb; a considerable quantity of cattle are in the neighbourhood, feeding on a rich pasture which runs to Kirgannick twenty-five miles further, where I got sight of the magnificent mountain scenery over hanging Verchney Kamtchatsk. One Sopka (Peak) is especially remarkable. Milkova, a Russian peasant village, ten miles distant contains fifteen houses and one hundred and twenty inhabit-

ants received me next, a neat place abounding in cattle, if thirty or forty of them may constitute an abundance; there are however no animals of the chase. A handsome church has of late been erected under the auspices of Captain Golenistcheff, the second in command of the peninsula, whom I found expecting my arrival. I continued for Verchney Kamtchatsk, also a peasants' village, but was obliged to return owing to the inefficiency of the dogs, although distant only eight miles; I at length reached it much fatigued, having come through a pretty place called Schegatchik, where some Cossacks are stationed to take care of a few heads of horned cattle, and four or five horses, which belong to the government. The situation is beautiful, on a branch of the Kamtchatka, which makes a semicircular indentation into the land, just opposite to Verchney Kamtchatsk, forming an island opposite to the junction of the Gatchick and Milkova.

I procured fresh dogs at Verchney, a place on the decline, and proceeded towards Sherom twenty miles, situated in one of the most romantic and enchanting valleys in the peninsula. I there met with the Ispravnick and eighteen nartes engaged for the collection of the yasacks, public and private, as well as for trade. I felt gratified to meet them, as I received good news of my affairs at the seat of government; and learnt also that there was a road before me to cross the desert, lying towards Malka. The Ispravnick had been detained four-

teen days in a storm, and he and all the party, men and dogs, were nearly perishing of hunger, having partaken of nothing but youkola (dried fish) for five days. Having exchanged dogs with another narte, I continued on for Pouschin, twenty miles, and arrived before noon. The Toion and I had a difference of opinion, which I shall ever regret, as it arose from my ignorance of the proper character of the Kamtchatdales. The poor man had heard of my coming, and had actually provided a good dinner for me, which I did not partake of, in consequence, of his not inviting me; another poor man actually did invite me, and I entered his more humble dwelling. The Toion was much surprised, and more vexed at this slight, which tended to lower him in the opinion of his subjects. The fact proved to be that the Toion is really one of the oldest Kamtchatdales, and was only complying with the ancient custom of the country, which is not to invite a stranger into his dwelling, considering that such stranger has the right not only to take it, but even to eject its owners. I left him with great regret that I could not stay another day to make him amends; I did, however, all I could, with this view.

Ganal, forty-five miles from Pouschin, a romantic country, we passed in high glee at the near prospect of finishing my journey. The elevated ranges of mountains which form the Ganal Valley have all flat summits. To the valley succeeds a level

plane, very subject to storms and heavy falls of snow. I reached the place at nine in the evening. The inhabitants, amounting to thirty-two, live in four yourtes, and are all afflicted with the disease so common to the peninsula; and the contagion, and want of medicine have been so great, that even the children are equally afflicted, and the complaint of scrofula is become hereditary. In this part of the peninsula the chase is scarce, and the inhabitants mostly subsist upon fish, a few mountain sheep, and wild rein-deer, being the only meat they taste from one end of the year to the other. The situation is fine and highly productive in fish, but at this moment there are not a sufficiency of people to transact the ordinary business; a circumstance which calls aloud for the compassion of the chief.

From Ganal to Malka are thirty miles, the first ten of which are over a sterile mountainous country, which is more than compensated by the succeeding richness of a valley eighteen miles in length. I crossed several times the Bistra, a rapid stream, uniting with the Bolshaya Reka, and was again obliged to become pilot, chief, and dog-master; however, I managed very well, and arrived early. Malka is deserving of little notice, yet is said to be celebrated for its baths! The situation is magnificently grand; the hospital stands in the bosom of a lofty chain of elevated mountains at two miles from the village. I was welcomed by two old acquaintances, both of whom

are doctors. Having refreshed myself, I proceeded to examine the hospitals and baths, all of which I found in a disgraceful state of filthiness and decay. There are two hospitals, one for the Kamtchatdales and a smaller one for the accommodation of the officers. There are also two baths, both ill contrived, and in want of every necessary and convenience which persons who have recourse to them require. The hospitals are without medicines, and the baths without flannel gowns, blankets, sheets, or towels; nor is there even a warm passage for the patient from the bath to the hospital; he must come from a place, where the atmosphere is equal to 25° of heat, and pass through a current of air where there may be 15° or 20° of frost. There never was a place where more could and ought to be, or where so little has been, done for the benefit of so wretched a people. The late chief doctor was five years in the command of this hospital, during which period he did nothing but keep his patients increasing in disease; indeed it may be considered a fortunate circumstance for the Kamtchatdales, that the governor was obliged to send him as surgeon of Captain Vassilieff's ship, in lieu of the proper surgeon who remained behind at sick quarters. Not even the most common vegetables have been raised; and but for a few cows, the benevolent present of Captain Rikord, the chief, I hardly know what there would be of the really useful for this establishment, which certainly owes

nothing either to the industry or humanity of the doctor before alluded to.

The state of some of those miserable creatures whom I saw in the hospital, was such as absolutely to prevent the doctor from dressing their wounds; of course I am incapable of describing them. They are allowed by the Emperor one pound of bread and half a pound of meat per day. They have also fish in abundance, and wild berries are to be found every where round the place. The patients, being all afflicted with one disease, are cramped up into one small space, never to go out but at their own desire, nor do any work, though they might raise an unlimited quantity of vegetables from the grounds covered with the warm vapour. In short, instead of being as it is, a place calculated to engender and nourish disease almost to pestilence, it might be, at a trifling expense and with proper care on the part of the head doctor, one of the most humane and efficient establishments on the face of the globe.

With respect to the nature and quality of the baths, they had a strong smell of sulphur, and an unpleasant taste. The hot and cold springs are united at the baths, and it is a strange circumstance, that the one should always be boiling hot in 25° of frost, while the other at 30° of heat is always below the freezing point. These were the only remarks my short stay, in the month of December, could enable me to make. I should, how-

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ever, in justice observe, that the present head doctor, if it be Mr. Gramatin, who was my shipmate in the transport from Okotsk, is a man of great talents, perseverance, and industry ; and had, previous to my leaving the Peninsula, seven months after my arrival and visit to the hospital, cleared the place of three-fourths of the patients, and sent them to their homes quite cured. He had no remedy but surgical operations, and succeeded in first putting the patient to sleep, and then cutting out all the afflicted parts. To the truth of this statement, extraordinary as it will doubtles appear in Russia, I beg leave to add the attestation of Dr. Zaerzerfskey, who was with me at the hospital at the time to which I allude.

My route from Malka to St. Peter and St. Paul's was over a highly picturesque valley, and in beautiful weather. I soon reached Nachikin and Koraki, and, changing dogs, proceeded very pleasantly till midnight damped our satisfaction a little with a fall of snow. We halted to refresh the dogs, and lay down till the peep of dawn enabled us to proceed, and we reached Avatcha by noon. But no dogs were to be procured there except three which carried my little baggage; I therefore proceeded on foot, and reached the haven at about three o'clock. My entry, alone and unperceived, was widely different from my departure :—my sensations were correspondent. In melancholy mood, leaving my betrothed for the sake of wandering

over a long and painful journey; returning delighted to have done so before I should be made most happy, by finding that betrothed true, and all that I could desire,—but no more of this.

Having thus completed the tour of the Peninsula, it will be proper in this place to enter on its description, with that of its inhabitants, their manners, customs, &c.

CHAPTER XI.

General Observations on the Peninsula of Kamtchatka.

KAMTCHATKA is a large peninsula of an elliptical figure, extending from the latitude of 59° to 51° N; the breadth is inconsiderable. A magnificent chain of mountains, with numerous sopkas or peaks, extend from north to south, the whole length of the peninsula, from which mountains numerous rivers, large and small, find their way into the ocean. Of these the Kamtchatka is the only navigable one, admitting vessels of one hundred tons as far as one hundred and fifty miles up the stream. All the rivers are, however, crowded with fish of superior flavour. There are also lakes of considerable size, and so numerous, that all intercourse between the several parts of the Peninsula is, during spring, summer and autumn, effectually precluded.

The productions of the country are few but valuable. There is an abundance of wood, as fit for ship-building as for general use. The finest timber is found on the banks of the Kamtchatka, Yelofka, and eastern coast, but the climate is such as to induce me to believe that neither corn nor vegetables will ever attain to great perfection; the soil in all seasons, at the depth of twenty-four to thirty inches, being frozen. Potatoes never ripen, cab-

bages never come to a head, and peas only flower; but turnips and radishes thrive amazingly. Grass of the most nutritious quality is found in the greatest abundance, as well in the numerous meadows as in the forests. It grows to the height of between five and six feet, and in some places three crops are produced within the year.

Winter may be said to occupy near one half of the year, spring and summer the other half. The winters are mild when compared to those of Siberia; the thermometer never descending, in the southern parts of the Peninsula, below 20° of Reaumur, and seldom below 12° and 15°. Spring is the most agreeable time, just when the leaves put forth, and it is then the fishing commences. The summer is the most disagreeable portion of the year, owing to the heavy rains and heavier fogs which come from the eternally snow-clad mountains. The greatest heat is in July, when the thermometer is at 27° and 28°. The snow lying upon the ground seven and eight months will sufficiently account for the want of cultivation, but indeed the remaining four can hardly be considered as equal to more than two months in other places; for the sun at St. Peter and St. Paul's has no effect upon the earth during more than four hours of the day, and from the immense height of the mountains, it is only from ten o'clock until two that any heat is felt.

This absence of heat, and these changes of climate, with the very heavy fogs, which account for

the sterility of the soil, operate also to prevent the inhabitants from laying in a sufficient store of winter provisions, which as they consist of fish are exposed to the air to dry, and in a short time become so rotten and maggotty, that but a small quantity can be made serviceable for the consumption of the people; the rest is retained for the dogs. Salt is at present issued, but not in sufficient quantities; were that article more liberally distributed, the people might in some years prepare fish to last them several successive ones. From the quantity now supplied by the king of the Sandwich islands, it is to be hoped that the first productive season will be taken advantage of.

Of wild vegetables, some of which are mixed with the bark of trees for the fare of the inhabitants, there is an abundance in Kamtchatka, and there is no doubt that greens, turnips, and radishes might with a little trouble be every where produced. Wild berries and wild garlick abound; the latter is exported to Okotsk and Yakutsk: this plant is one of the finest antiscorbutics known, but has a peculiarly offensive smell.

The principal riches of Kamtchatka may be said to consist in the animals of the chase, of which there are so prodigious a number, that there are not sufficient inhabitants to take them. The most valuable are foxes of various colours, a few sea and more river otters, with an immense number of sables. Bears, wolves, rein-deer and mountain-

sheep, and sometimes a few lynxes, are also to be found. The number of skins annually exported and consumed in the peninsula is about thirty thousand, of which sables and foxes form the principal part. The sables are considered at once the warmest and the coarsest known; the foxes however, especially the fiery red, are of the finest species. Next to these furs, the dogs of Kamtchatka may be considered as forming a great part of their riches. These faithful and useful animals, are employed to transport fish, supply the house with water, the cattle with hay,—in short to do all the work that horses perform in England. They are fed as circumstances may dictate, being always left to shift for themselves from June to October. They are of a coarse appearance, in shape resembling a common house-dog, but endued with great sagacity, and it is to be regretted that they are not relieved a little by the importation of horses.

Independent of fish and wild animals, the Kamtchatdales derive also a considerable benefit from the surprising quantities of geese, ducks, swans, snipes, and wild cocks. They are preserved by dipping them in water, which freezing, they will be good as long as winter continues; at other times they are salted. The ducks and snipes are most excellent; but the geese, swans, and wild sheep are considered venison, and of the most delicious kind too, by those who are termed epicures; for myself although I have frequently partaken of them,

I never could relish their flesh. The Kamtchatdales also derive great benefit from the whales which are numerous, and which being encountered by the Kasatka, for the sake of the tongue, as is supposed, are killed and cast ashore. Upon the whole, therefore, there are no people at whose disposition Providence has placed more of the necessaries of life, than the inhabitants of Kamtchatka. For their direct subsistence, they have fish, flesh, and fowl, wild berries and roots in great variety and abundance, sufficient doubtless to maintain a large population; while for clothing, they have immense quantities of furs of the warmest and most durable kind; and for firing and building, wood is every where to be had in the utmost profusion.

Such being the case, it becomes a matter of speculation, what could induce the aborigines to live in that filthy and famished condition which formerly characterized them. Was it from an over abundant population, or the want of means to possess themselves of food—such as guns, nets and traps? That they had means to entrap game and fish for a certain proportion of the inhabitants there can be no doubt, but whether sufficient for a large population is very questionable.

Of the people in general, I can only say they are as amiable and honest as ever. They are now established in villages all built in the old Russian style, which are clean and comfortable. During the summer or fishing season, they leave their winter resi-

dences for the balagans or places which they use for drying their fish. Thus the summer is employed in preparing food against the winter, which latter is taken up in the chase. Beyond this the Kamtchatdale is still the same lazy, drunken, servile animal as formerly. Their ancient language is not forgotten, but is so far out of use that there are few who do not speak Russian. Most of the aborigines are baptized, and may be said to live as the Russians do. The number of real Kamtchatdales who retain their ancient usages is small. They reside on the northern coasts beyond Tygil and Nishney Kamtchatsk. Hospitality is the most striking feature in their character; but they are also distinguished by their strict adherence to truth, and their honesty is proverbial. Without being forward to complain of ill-treatment, they will fearlessly recount it when questioned. They are in part governed by their own Toions or Chiefs, but an annual visit is made to each village by the Ispravnick or Chief Judge, as well for the purpose of collecting sables as of administering justice.

Their dress is the same as formerly, that for the winter season being made of the skins of beasts; but in summer they wear nankeens, and at present there is hardly a Kamtchatdale who does not wear a shirt. The women have also adopted the Russian head-dress, the articles for which are procured from the pedlers at a most exorbitant rate. It is surprising that this people who have now been feeling

the extreme of oppression from neglect and maladministration, for one hundred and twenty years, should not have become wiser and more economical in their habits; on the contrary, one might suppose they were a people but yesterday discovered. They will part with the most valuable furs for a trifling article, or a glass of spirits.

I need say nothing of their superstitions, as they are nearly at an end. They now place as much reliance upon the efforts of the priests, as they formerly did on their shamanes, with this difference only, that to the latter they give many furs, while to the former they only gave a hearty meal.

Of laws they have but few of their own, their motto being something like that of the Chinese, "to return evil for evil, and good for good." At present they await the arrival of the Chief, of an Officer, or of a Commissary, with a great deal of ceremony, giving him the best lodging, and acknowledging, if I may so say, his supremacy. Formerly, it appears, they lived in a perfect state of equality and independence of each other, age and expertness in hunting alone being held in estimation or respect.

The Kamtchatdales are now supplied with culinary utensils and every thing they can require by the Russians; and as they live exactly in the same manner, and in the same description of houses with the latter, I need only refer my readers to an account of a Russian village; in their outward ap-

pearance there is no difference whatever. They seem a race disburthened of all care and consideration for the future, and entirely resigned to any fate which may await them, whether it be oppression or starvation.

In my opinion, and I speak it most sincerely, the aborigines have not derived much benefit from the conquest of their country by the Russians, as even their conversion to Christianity has done little other good, than entitled them to the name of Christians. The great number of priests and deacons (twenty-six in number) would, I presume, suggest an expectation of more learning and piety in this part of the world than in other semi-barbarous places; but really I have never seen any good effects from the labours of these reverend gentlemen. Certainly there is no population corresponding to the number of ecclesiastics, as will appear on considering that the whole Kamtchatdale population does not exceed, male and female, two thousand seven hundred and sixty, while their dogs amount to two thousand two hundred and eight. The number of Russians is one thousand two hundred and sixty. The inhabitants north of Tygil and Nishney Kamtchatks, are four hundred and ninety-eight, while in the Koriak villages there are one hundred souls; making a population of four thousand five hundred and seventy-four, men, women, and children, Russians, Kamtchatdales and Koriaks. Whether the original population has not decreased in a surpris-

ing degree is a question I shall not answer, farther than by reminding my readers that at the discovery of Kamtchatka, we are told in the Russian history, that no less than one hundred and sixteen villages were on the banks of the river Kamtchatka. The small-pox, and its rival distemper, with other diseases, and above all the spirit of persecution which has been unremittingly practised towards these poor people, have been the several causes of the depopulation. Of late, however, I can with certainty say the population has not decreased; this may be owing to the benefits arising from vaccination, as well as somewhat better medical attendants. But although population has of late kept its maximum, it may be a question whether the aborigines have not decreased in the same ratio that the Russians and convicts have increased. At present there are several Yakut as well as Russian exiles, in the peninsula, neither of whom can be of much benefit; but both assisting to persecute and plunder the Kamtchatdales.

Of the history and origin of the Kamtchatdales little positive has ever been known; and that only for the last one hundred and thirty years. Kamtchatka is supposed to have been visited by some Russians in 1649, when one of the traveller Deshneff's vessels, was wrecked on its coast. Those Russians lived with them in peace for a considerable period of time; but quarrelling among themselves were murdered. Nothing more is known of the place

until Vladimir Atlassof discovered the peninsula in his excursions from the Anadyr, from which time a constant petty warfare continued between the Russians and natives, until the general revolt and massacre in 1731. Since this period, the peninsula has not been greatly troubled with either conspiracies or massacres. Little doubt can exist that the Kamtchatdales are of Asiatic origin; of this, their features and customs, as well as their dwarfish size, are evident tokens. I have read several dissertations upon the subject, but disagree with most of them. My own opinion is formed from ocular demonstration alone, and not from a study of the circumstances under which they labour. Their having progressed from America is indeed a ridiculous idea; and their having learnt many secrets, as causing fire by friction, &c. from the inhabitants of the opposite continent, is just as probable as the other sagacious notions, that they were the teachers. How, in either case, could they pass that formerly ferocious and warlike race, the Tchuktchi? Or if they had come from the north of Siberia, from Irkutsk or Yakutsk by Okotsk, and Idgiga, how did they pass the still more fierce and barbarous Koriaks? The idea is absurd; and the only one I can for a moment entertain is, that they are a Mongole tribe, who were driven down the Amoor, and passing along the Kurile Isles, reached Kamtchatka. A few of the same race are still the inhabitants of those isles,

with a dialect of the same language, originating from the Mongolian, and the only difference between them and the Kamtchatdales is, that they are a more manly, and consequently a more independent race; for of all the people at present existing, I believe the natives of this peninsula to be the most affable and hospitable; but, at the same time, the most cowardly and insensible. I never saw in any part of the world a people more abused, under the sanction of a proverb, now become almost a principle, " God is high, and the Emperor far off."

Their modes of fishing and hunting, and such productions of the country as I have not noticed may be found in Cook's and other travels. I will therefore proceed to compare the present happiness of the people of this Peninsula, with that which they formerly enjoyed. In the first place, as to their possessions in horses or horned cattle.—It appears by the last census, that there are but one hundred and nine of the former, and nine hundred and sixty-eight of the latter in the whole Peninsula, two-thirds of which are in the hands of the Russians; and but three hundred and ninety-three head of cattle in the possession of three thousand four hundred Kamtchatdales and Koriaks. It is to be regretted that the flattering prospects held out by Captain King, have not been realized. The introduction of horses and horned cattle would much tend to ameliorate the condition of the peo-

ple, were they once imported upon a large scale. The dogs, like the aborigines, are on the decline, and probably twenty or thirty years more will leave nothing in Kamtchatka but the Russians and animals of the chase. When it is recollected that Kamtchatka has such magnificent and extensive meadows, and that the climate is not severe; and when it is considered with what facility government might send each year two or three hundred head of young cattle by the annual transports to Tygil, it may be naturally supposed that the different chiefs have been attending more to their personal concerns than to those of the peninsula. That the place might be made even to flourish, there can be no reasonable doubt.

The expenses of the colony have been very great to Russia, and must continue so, as long as the present plan is persisted in. The yasack amounts to a less sum of money than the single maintenance of a chief. Five hundred heads of foxes or sables, worth six thousand roubles, or three hundred pounds, is the amount; while the expences of the colony cannot fall short of two hundred thousand roubles, or ten thousand pounds.

The depopulated state of this peninsula is also to be attributed to other causes. Their continual wars and insurrections greatly thinned them, and these were followed by the introduction of the small-pox, which in the year 1768, carried off no less than six thousand persons; and twenty thousand are sup-

posed to have fallen victims to it within a short period. Yet at this moment there is a want of vaccinating matter, nor is it a questionable assertion that the quality of medicines in the hospitals is shamefully adulterated, and the quantity small. The present worthy chief has however caused an inquiry to be made upon this subject, and the result has been transmitted to government. But it is not the small pox alone, that the arrival of the Russians introduced into this place; the distemper before alluded to has made, and continues to make, most dreadful ravages in every part of the peninsula, very few families being free from the taint, and no part of the world can show more miserable objects of its fury. The whole race indeed look like beings better qualified to extinguish than propagate the human species; nor is this surprising, considering their present state, almost without hospitals, medicines, or attendants, save that ill-managed house at Malka.

Besides these two diseases, the inhabitants of Kamtchatka are subject to all those which make havoc in countries where the people are ordinarily ill fed, ill clothed, and liable to famine. The last has frequently visited this Peninsula, more from a want of people than of food; for fish is not always to be had upon both sides of the Peninsula at the same time, and they have not the means of transporting the superabundant quantity to the opposite coast.

Another great cause of this ravage in population has arisen from the introduction of spirits: a Kamtchatdale will sell his last sable or fox for a glass of it, though he is not physically strong enough to drink any thing of the kind. When it is considered that sixteen thousand bottles of this trash are consumed in the short period of three or four months by six or seven hundred people, we may well feel pity and surprise—pity for the poor women and children, and surprise at the means of getting either the money or sables. Such a quantity of spirit ought to sell for fifty thousand roubles, which is one hundred per cent. upon the price at Okotsk, but it is in reality sold for twice that sum. When it is recollected that officers, soldiers, sailors, merchants, and priests travel round the Peninsula for the purposes of trade, it will be less wonderful when I assert that each bottle of spirits sold to the Kamtchatdales, produces the value of ten and twelve shillings. Now allowing half the quantity imported (eight thousand bottles) to be consumed by the aborigines, this would produce from eighty to one hundred thousand roubles, while the cost is, in Okotsk, only twenty-five thousand. I have seen a bottle of spirits sold for a sable, and afterwards, when the party was drunk, a bottle of adulterated liquor has fetched the same price: in short, I have seen three and even four sables given for two bottles of spirits.

Allowing seven hundred and fifty families of the

Koriaks and Kamtchatdales, which is five to each family, and that half the quantity of imported spirit is consumed by them, it will appear that each family consumes at least twelve bottles in four months. By this plan the poor purchaser is drunk for days together, and for the rest of the year can get nothing to cheer him under his depression. The cost of that spirit to the Kamtchatdales is one hundred and fifty or two hundred roubles, a prodigious sum for a poor family to expend upon an article so pernicious in its moral and physical effects. Such a sum of money in Kamtchatka would produce near six or eight hundred pounds weight of flour; enough to support a small family during a whole year: or, such a sum would enable them to purchase proper clothing, culinary utensils, nets, twine, tobacco, axes, and knives. The evil of these grog-shops is carried to so ruinous an extent, that the children of the natives are left for three and four days without any food, save yukola, dried fish, doled out to them one or twice within that time. I have known instances of mothers and children being left without any means of support, in consequence of the retailing of such trash being allowed. The yukola and the bark of trees is, in such cases, almost the only nourishment the women and children can procure for several days. If they happen to be possessed of a cow, they are considered very fortunate. It needs little philosophy to prove that it is only by taking care of the rising

generation that the stock itself can be preserved, which will not long be possible, if spirit continue to be transported and retailed out as it now is.—While making these reflections in England, I am aware that the Russian Government have desisted from this trade, but this is only the worse for the Kamtchatdales, inasmuch as the pedlers take an extra quantity, and demand a most exorbitant price for a spirit infinitely inferior.

The abuses arising from the collection of the yasack are most cruel. The yasack itself is inconsiderable, but from the arbitrary manner in which it is collected, it is rendered odious and oppressive. The tribute is levied in kind at any low or capricious valuation, and it has not unfrequently happened that the Toion of a village, who does not properly compliment the Chief or other officer, upon the annual visit, has so small a price put upon his furs, in payment of their tribute, that they sustain a loss of two, three, and even four hundred per cent. I have seen sables valued at half-a-crown for which the merchants present would have given twelve shillings. Independent of the yasack, each Kamtchatdale has to pay seventy copecs, or seven pence, as a sort of capitation or poll-tax, upon failure of which the Ispravnick may have recourse to the most arbitrary and unjust measures. Any property may be seized and sold on the moment, such as axes, knives, nets, guns, kettles, or the clothing of the family; and it has often happened that a

poor family has been ruined through the cruel and oppressive conduct of these tax-gatherers, not from a deficiency of the *legal* dues, but of illegal dues. The mode of taxation in each ostrog is also highly objectionable, and sometimes rendered cruel. They are not taxed as a people but as a place, and it not unfrequently happens that the village which formerly contained forty or fifty able people, and was taxed as such, does not the following year contain more than twenty or twenty-five, in consequence of illness or removals. There is, however, no remedy, the yasack of the whole must be paid by the few. It is also not a little singular that each ostrog is taxed in money, and yet money cannot be received; the duplicity of this act is too apparent to be mentioned, yet it would be seen that the government must be unacquainted with a fact of the kind, for the difference in the amount of the tribute would not equal one hundred pounds. Instead of the sum of money at which each village is rated, the inhabitants are obliged to pay furs at one fourth the value. Sables of the finest quality, and worth forty shillings a pair, are never averaged at more than ten. It would be more honest to increase the nominal tribute of money, or put a specific tax on furs, which would be felt less severely, because an appearance of candour would accompany it.

The next galling tax is that levied for the tax-gatherer himself, and this is a greater grievance than that levied on behalf of the Emperor, and under more humiliating circumstances. Each os-

trog, and each Toion or Chief of it, is also compelled to pay the same tribute to his actual Chief as to the Emperor himself; so that the yasack is *de facto* paid at least five times over.

Nor is the impolitic system of collecting the tribute more injurious than that arising from forced or gratuitous services, such as the forwarding of the post, the transport of flour and salt, and the issuing of padvodies, or forced levies of horses or dogs, to officers and favourites. This is indeed an intolerable abuse, and calls loudly for redress. There can be no doubt but that if the proprietors of dogs were rewarded at a proper time and in a proper manner, they would as much court the employment as they now abhor it. According to the present plan the natives lose their time, their dogs, their health, and their provisions. Any favourite or officer who may wish to trade is furnished with one of these free billets, which authorizes him, upon the plea of public duty, to call out men and dogs. While the manner of the officer or favourite seems to intimate, that he confers an obligation upon the Chief of the village by his acceptance of a couple of sables as a present. Nor is this all: not content with the present, the party travelling has the privilege of trading, and buying just as many more sables as the poor aboriginal may have caught, and which are invariably sold for just such a consideration as the officer may incline to give.

If a governor or officer be compelled to travel upon public service, and receive from the Crown a

sum of money to pay travelling expenses, it seems very strange that such money is not paid to these poor people. As little can I understand why a post should travel gratis: surely the poorest and most distant part of the Russian empire, should not be oppressed in such a manner. It is true, the sum paid by the government to officers when travelling is small, as well as that paid to the postillion when in charge of the post; but small as it is in itself, it would be acceptable to those to whom it would appear much. As to officers' travelling, for which there is no public necessity, they can at best but reap the advantages belonging to the fair trader, who is not inconsiderably taxed. I have heard an officer of high rank assert, that every voyage from Kamtchatka to Okotsk and back again, was worth ten thousand roubles, or five hundred pounds; and I believe he spoke the truth.

With respect to the pedlers, here denominated merchants, they in truth ought to be taxed severely, as well in regard to the goods they bring as the price at which they are sold, the articles being such as are of light burthen, or will return the greatest profit. The ignorance of the aborigines is such, and their thoughtlessness of the future so great, that they prefer present luxuries to future necessities. The quantity of articles hawked about by the merchants consists of tobacco, spirits, silks, tea, sugar, nankeen, and cotton handkerchiefs. Every Kamtchatdale keeps open house, and upon the arrival of a Russian his door is held open, the

owner standing by it uncovered, and awaiting the entry of his noble guest, who, making an obeisance to the kasaika or landlady, passes on to the most comfortable part of the dwelling, and divesting himself of the unwieldy clothing so necessary in this part of the world, calls for dinner or supper as the time may be, orders food for his dogs, eats and drinks well, has a bed prepared for him, and takes breakfast, consisting of fine game, fish, and the like. The intermediate time is employed in extorting three or four hundred per cent. profit for his goods, and the only remuneration to his host is a glass of spirits or a leaf of tobacco, in some cases not even a "thank ye," although stress of weather has, unfortunately for them, detained him to partake of their hospitality for a week or more.

Were the merchants compelled to take more woollens and linens, some flour or oatmeal, with a sufficient quantity of axes, knives, kettles, twine, nets, and other implements of great necessity, there would be less objection to their proceeding round the Peninsula, and less inducement for officers to do so. Tobacco, it is true, is an article of great demand as well as of great necessity; tea and sugar are also in considerable demand, though, probably, too much money is lavished upon both these articles, by the Kamtchatdales; as also upon silks, nankeens, and fine cottons. A great benefit would arise from the establishment of a general fair in Kamtchatka, to he held at St. Peter and St. Paul's, as well as from two or three provin-

cial fairs to be held upon a certain day at certain places. Among the people who also travel round the peninsula of Kamtchatka are doctors and parsons. They are both extremely troublesome, for while the one affects to prepare the soul, and the other the body, both I believe are more concerned in fleecing the thoughtless aboriginal, and in depriving him of the means of support.

The quantity of convicts sent amongst a people so susceptible of imposition is also a serious grievance. The convicts, as Russians, have an indirect ascendancy over the Kamtchatdales, which is exercised in a most intolerant and infamous manner. The convicts frequently desert, and commit every species of villany and outrage, even to the fomenting of insurrections. This was the case during my stay in the peninsula; nor are the Kamtchatdales so dull, but that they remember Count Beniofsky with horror. If the government of Russia really feel interested in the prosperity of Kamtchatka, and I don't doubt it, they have an easy mode of effecting it, by transplanting thither two or three thousand Yakuti, with their cattle. They are an industrious, ingenious, and peaceable people; and, being excellent herdsmen, they could not, of course, but thrive in a country of such extensive and rich pastures.

I cannot refrain from mentioning what appears to me a most desirable plan of administering a direct, and yet in-expensive relief to these poor people: Let the yasack be totally abolished, and let

each family of the aborigines be compelled to take from the government one pood of flour per month, at the price, say, of a sable or fox skin. The result would be, that government would issue an extra six thousand poods of flour at an expense of sixty thousand roubles, in return for which they would receive six thousand skins, worth at least ninety thousand roubles; leaving a gross profit of four times the price of the present yasack, and actually assisting the Kamtchatdales by the abandonment of a direct tax of half the amount—to say nothing of the benefits which would accrue from such a measure to the females and children who are now left for many days without tasting any other food than bad fish or the bark of trees. I do not know what effect a poll-tax may have upon the animal frame, but it appears to be no incitement to procreation. In Kamtchatka it is the same as in Mexico; a single man pays a heavy tax, a married man a heavier, and a father the heaviest of all. Such conduct is bad policy on the part of government, and carries with it more the appearance of a wish to extinguish than to increase the population of Siberia.

I have already commented upon the evil effects arising from forced levies, and forced services; of the transport of flour, salt, spirits, the post, as well as officers from one place to another without any remuneration to the inhabitants. Of the conduct of these travelling gentlemen, high and low, it will be sufficient to give a specimen. The officer, upon arriving at a village, is received by the Toion or

Chief, and conducted to the warmest and cleanest part of the yourte. His upper garments are taken from him, cleared of the snow and put out in the open air for the night; it being understood that the colder the dress is put on in a cold country, the warmer it ultimately becomes. The landlady, or Toionsha, is also engaged in scraping the boots of the travellers, to prevent the heat of the room from melting the snow which adheres to them. The best provisions are then got ready as fast as possible, either for dinner or supper, as the time may suit. The Toion then comes in with a reluctant smile and a pair of handsome sables, and bowing to the officer, places them upon the table for his acceptance. Dinner being at length served up, the officer may be considerate enough to give the Toion a glass of spirits, as also to permit the family to partake of the tea-leavings. Having finished his dinner, the officer asks the Toion if the chase has been good, and how many sables he has got, probably two, four or six, which he accordingly takes for as many handkerchiefs, pieces of nankeen, pounds of tobacco, or a small quantity of tea and sugar. The dogs of the village are at last ordered out and the officer departs, in perfect complacency with his conduct and condescending demeanour.

I have never been able to ascertain the exact number of animals annually caught in the peninsula, but suppose they cannot fall short of thirty thousand, worth at least two hundred thousand roubles. One

out of every forty is supposed to be paid to the emperor upon their arrival at Okotsk, but it is very difficult to insure any payment of such a tax except from the regular traders, and they also manage to defraud the government of the proper dues. The value of the furs varies; a sea-otter is worth thirty-five pounds; a river-otter, two pounds; a black fox, twenty pounds; black and white fox, ten pounds; brown fox, two pounds; a common fox, twelve shillings; and a white or blue fox, as little as two shillings and sixpence; sables vary from eight to twelve shillings. For these bread is bartered at eight shillings the pood; tea at twelve shillings the pound; sugar, four shillings, and tobacco three shillings the pound; in short no article is sold for less than four hundred per cent. profit upon the actual expense of fetching it from Canton; with the advantage in that case of procuring all sorts of coarse cottons, nankeens, and handkerchiefs, besides iron utensils.

The American Company might, and ought to contract with the government for supplying flour to Okotsk, Idgiga and Kamtchatka, for which about forty thousand poods are annually required. Their abundance of unemployed vessels would also enable them to furnish the aborigines with every thing they require, at a cheap and yet a profitable rate. But such is the pertinacity and jealousy of those composing that body, that they will do nothing even to benefit themselves, if it be also of

benefit to others. And thus, a trade with Manilla, Canton, the South Sea islands, California, Calcutta and Japan, as well as the establishment of a whale fishery are sacrificed; and the eastern frontiers of the Russian empire remain in their original barren, impoverished, and savage state, instead of boasting a flourishing trade carried on by a civilized, organized, and friendly population. The produce of the above mentioned places might be warehoused in Kamtchatka, and in the ensuing summer be transported to Okotsk, and thence over all Siberia.

The drying and salting of fish, the felling of timber for furniture, and the countenancing of agricultural pursuits, could not fail of benefiting Kamtchatka; but the whale fishery would, above all things redound to the honour and interest of Russia. It may not be amiss to add, that the importation of foreign corn would much assist the Yakuti; its immediate effect would be to save the lives of twenty thousand horses, which are annually sacrificed by hard work or famine. Formerly, when the horses were more numerous, from eighty to one hundred thousand were annually employed between Okotsk and Yakutsk by the merchants, the American Company, and the government; at present there are not more than thirty thousand. Of these, at least one half are sacrificed, and the remainder rendered unfit for a second trip. The whole number of horses annually sacrificed does not, it is said, fall short of fifty thousand; so that ere long they will also be

extinct, and with them the very being of the Yakuti, who are even now going down in an equal ratio.

Much benefit has been derived to the colony from the exertions of the present Chief, Captain Rikord. The rule of never allowing a cow to be killed until she is past calving, is in itself excellent, but the stock on hand is so small that a century would elapse before what can be termed herds of cattle could be seen wandering and feasting upon the almost unbounded pastures of the peninsula. What the different chiefs have been doing for the last fifty years, Heaven alone knows! When Captains King and Clarke were here, they seem to have taken it for granted, or to have been informed, that cattle of all descriptions were in a flourishing state. From the proximity of Okotsk to Tygil, a couple of transports might, in one summer, transport at least one thousand head of cattle, which, repeated for ten years, would place the peninsula in an absolutely enviable situation. This act of humanity would be attended with no expense to the government; the Kamtchatdales would willingly pay the value in sables, and the result would be, that no part of the vast Russian empire would be richer or better provided with food of various descriptions than the distant province of Kamtchatka.

Upon the banks of the Kamtchatka, where the land lies distant from the salt water, and sheltered by the mountains from the east winds; as well as

on those banks which have been enriched by the lava emitted by the volcanoes, barley, oats, and rye have been produced, but in no instance with so much success as to pay the labour. The productions, it is true, have been a little more varied and a little riper, but rarely consumable. In spite of this fact, the gazettes of St. Petersburgh formally and officially announce this year that a quartern of rye produced nine quarterns, and that the size or weight of a common potatoe was three quarters of a pound. Three quarters of an ounce would be a sufficient tax upon credulity: I have no hesitation in saying that both these reports are fabulous in every sense of the word, for I have never seen a potatoe in the whole province either ripe, or larger than a hen's egg.

If large herds of cattle were distributed on the banks of the Kamtchatka, and other favoured places, with the benefit of manure, agricultural implements, and knowledge, no doubt the soil might be made to answer the purpose. I certainly cannot conceive the climate of Kamtchatka to be such, as of itself to preclude the pursuit of agriculture in some of its minor branches, as I consider the soil to be much superior to that of Connecticut, or Massachusetts, or either of our Canadas.

In the vicinity of Avatcha are to be seen, what are by some termed artificial enclosures, within which cattle were formerly maintained, but I conclude them to be natural enclosures formed by the

overflowing of the rivers. My reason is, that no enclosure is to be found upon the land side, but only on the borders of the rivers, and small streams, and there they are perfect; and we are generally informed that the Kamtchatdales possessed no other domestic animals than dogs.

Before entirely closing these remarks respecting Kamtchatka, and its grievances, I may just advert to one or two points not hitherto dwelt on. The children of the natives receive no education, and the children of the Russians but little more. There certainly is a school existing in St. Peter and St. Paul's, governed by a priest, and regular schoolmaster; but one is a great rogue, and the other a greater sot. The sum allowed for the maintenance of each child is, I believe, five pounds per annum, scarcely enough to buy clothing, and were it not for the abundance of fish caught, and some assistance from their families, I really do not see how the boys could be kept alive. Of the clerical gentlemen themselves, I may observe, that they maintain a great distinction between practice and precept. They are very numerous: I know not what so many do in so poor a place, there being no congregations to employ so great a number. The revenue received by these reverend gentlemen is far from inconsiderable, and although it is done under the disguise of voluntary contribution, still it presses heavy upon the people; and heavier still when it is considered that they do little work of any kind be-

sides trade. Of late the Emperor has given the clergy an allowance of flour as well as a regular salary, and it may therefore be hoped that the natives will, at least, be so far benefited as to have fewer of their visits, except on their spiritual concerns.

Whether the Russian government will pay any attention to the serious and deplorable situation of the peninsula of Kamtchatka is of no personal consequence to me, though I may well feel a strong interest concerning a place in which I resided for more than a year, and where I married. The ceremony was attended with much more pomp and parade than if it had been celebrated in England: it took place on the 8th of January, and I certainly am the first Englishman that ever married a Kamtchatdale, and my wife undoubtedly the first native of that peninsula that ever visited happy Britain.

The winter was passed in a constant round of hospitality and comfort, and hardly any thing remarkable occurred to call for observation. Three shocks of earthquakes were felt, two of them very severe: one threw the sand up from the banks of the river Kamtchatka, and quite annihilated the snow; the Kliuchefska Sopka also emitted flames and lava. The snow began to disappear at St. Peter and St. Paul's in the beginning of May. By the middle of the month one of the transports sailed from the port to Nishney Kamtchatsk, reaching it in five days; and by the latter

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARA...

end of May the snow had entirely disappeared, and Spring, in the course of a few days, made her welcome appearance; wild flowers and vegetables were every where springing up, and enlivening the dreariness of the last seven months. Even the rigging of the transport which was to carry me back, excited my interest, and reminded me of former times. The attention of the inhabitants was sufficiently engaged by the accession of fish, as herrings in the inner harbour, cod in the outer haven, and seals every where. Some among them proceeded to the islands at the mouth of the haven, and brought in some thousands of eggs, while others were out in shooting parties, sending us in snipes, wild ducks, and partridges. The wild garlic made its first appearance at Cape Garlick so early as the 15th of May.

Only a few individuals died in the hospital, most of them with the scurvy; the remainder were soon restored to sound health by Spring and fresh fish. Our evening walks were sometimes extended to the summits of the hills, where we took our tea or smoked a segar; but latterly the little place,—I cannot call it a town,—became overflowed from the melting of the snow, and it was with difficulty we could move about. In the month of June a vessel arrived from Canton and Manilla, in ballast, having failed in procuring a cargo of flour. By that vessel I received a most friendly letter from Mr. Urmston, the chief of the British factory, together

with a file of English newspapers, magazines, &c. which employed me till the 1st of July, when we were ready to sail.

St. Peter and St. Paul's, the chief city of the peninsula of Kamtchatka, contains forty-two dwellings, besides fifteen edifices belonging to the government, an old church, and the foundation of a new one. Among the public buildings are to be reckoned magazines for bread, for powder, for sailors, for convicts, for wine, and for arms; a guard-house, smithy, hospital, chancery, school, and a building for the chief and his assistant. All, however, with the exception of the hospital, sailor's barracks, and school, are at best, like the rest of the city, emblems of misery and wretchedness. I have never seen even on the banks of the Frozen Sea so contemptible a place, hardly meriting the name of a village, much less that of a city; yet such is the place which has been so eulogized from one end of the world to the other. The erection of hospitals, of schools, of churches, and the diffusion of happiness, have been extravagantly vaunted of in magazines and reviews, in defiance of the most lamentable facts of a very opposite description.

I cannot imagine what a governor has to do in such a place; a civil commissary would surely have been enough. The only people, in my opinion, who can be called happy, are the Koriaks, because they are independent. The Russians complain of being sent to such a vile place, utterly

destitute of society; the Creoles of their being kept in a state of poverty; while the Kamtchatdales bitterly lament the association with either the one or the other. It has been observed that St. Peter and St. Paul's can never be a good town, owing to its want of wood. It may be asked, why then was the seat of government removed from a more eligible place, Nishney Kamtchatsk, or why was it not removed to the centre of agriculture and population, so far as either can be said to exist? It has been already changed three times, and is, I believe, destined to another removal. Kamtchatka neither can nor will thrive so long as its chiefs are sent for five years only: such a short period scarcely allows them the time of doing good, however well disposed they may be. The general mode of occupying the allotted term may be thus described. The first year is employed in looking about and forming places for the improvement of the country, the amelioration of the condition of the aborigines, &c.: the second year is passed in making reports, stating opinions, &c.: the third year brings the reply of the government, directing or authorizing the mode of administration: the fourth is employed in preparing or at most in acting upon such orders: while the fifth and last year is generally employed in preparing to return to Europe, and levying a parting contribution:—and thus the whole five years are, more or less, taken up in trading and accumulating as much

money as possible. The very shortest term of a chief's command at Kamtchatka should be ten years: let him then only be liberally paid, and I will venture to say, that many suitable characters will be found, who will prefer to administer justice with clemency and honor, to the degrading of their characters by a mean and derogatory traffic. If an increase of rank, double pay and provisions, an extra pension, and the most unlimited powers are not sufficient to ensure a just discharge of the duties, what besides conscience ever can induce it?

Of the Kurile Islands, though they are not now in the government of Kamtchatka, having been ceded by the Emperor in property to the American Company, I shall make but a very few remarks, and with them close my observations on Kamtchatka.

This chain of islands is divided between the Russian and Japanese empires; of those belonging to the former empire, but few are inhabited. The first Kurile, situate at sixty-five miles from Cape Lopatka, has three yourtes, with four males and eight females, nominally paying as tribute six sea-otters and twelve roubles in money; but, as no sea-otters are found, and the islands abound in foxes, seven of these are received in lieu of them. There is in the island a tolerable road-stead for small craft on the NW side. Immense quantities of waterfowl, as ducks, geese, and swans, frequent the place; and from the skins and feathers

the inhabitants make their parkas and all their warm clothing, which are also exceedingly comfortable and beautiful. The climate of the islands resembles that of St. Peter and St. Paul's. The soil is generally good, producing fine pastures. On the first isle there was formerly an abundance of cattle, but now only two cows remain.

The second island, about ninety miles from the first, has seven yourtes, with thirty-five males and forty-two females, paying tribute for itself and the fourteenth isle, nominally, thirty-five sea-otters; that is, twenty-three foxes and one hundred and fifty roubles. The fourteenth isle has three yourtes, fifteen males, and seventeen females. Of the intermediate islands, and those beyond the fourteenth, I could obtain but very little information; the whole are evidently volcanic productions, and are supposed to have been separated by some violent convulsion of nature from the peninsula of Kamtchatka. The islands, which are lofty and bold, are said to be without rivers, nor are there any harbours known. It is to be remembered, however, that they have been but very imperfectly surveyed. The inhabitants are supposed to be of the same origin as those of Kamtchatka, though they differ in the custom of wearing long beards, which was probably introduced among them by the Russians. Their dialect is the same with that of the inhabitants near Cape Lopatka; from whence baidares are frequently sent to the

first and second isle, to bring the tribute and furs. Foxes are said to be the only animals of the chase, and here they abound in all colours. Sea otters were also formerly taken, and still, at intervals, visit some of the islands. Excepting those caught near Nishney Kamtchatsk, they are considered the most valuable of the species.

CHAPTER XII.

Departure from Kamtchatka—Re-arrival at Okotsk—Further Observations on that place — Bulgeine — The Udoma — Ouchakan — Anchekon — Achan and Konkui Rivers —Chornoi Lass — Chakdalka — Chekinvio— The Aldan— Amgie—Lena—Rivers—Re-arrival at Yakutsk — General Observation on the Yakuti, and of their Metropolis.

I REMAINED in Kamtchatka eleven months enjoying that hospitality and kindness which the chief so eminently possesses the means and manner of conferring. The vessel in which we prepared to return to Okotsk, was the same which brought me to Kamtchatka, but although she was ready in June it was not until the 5th of July, 1822, that the anchor was weighed, and with a light northern breeze we bade adieu to Kamtchatka. As we steered along shore, the coast offered a lively verdant appearance, no snow being visible except on the elevated peaks. In five days we reached the latitude of Cape Lopatka, bearing West ten leagues. At the close of the day, when thus situated, and with a light air from the SE, the sky assumed an unusual fiery red, while the beautiful tinge on the dark fleeting clouds presented a most sublime aspect, though it evidently foreboded something awful. The constant changes in the appearance of the heavens over the high lands of Kamtchatka and the islands, reminded us of an aurora borealis, as

this, as in the real aurora, had its fiery meteors moving about. By midnight the wind veered to SW by W, and ultimately settled in a heavy gale from the NW, the last being the scene of the most glowing part of the sky. An immense cloud of smoke had also been visible for a couple of days in the NNW direction. Before our arrival at Okotsk it had been ascertained that a great part of the immense forests north of the bay of Avatcha had been destroyed, and that a severe concussion of the earth had taken place upon the day of the gale. Fortunately for us it was an off shore wind, or our destruction would have been inevitable. During the forty-eight hours that we were lying too under bare poles, we were driven to the SE about one hundred and fifty miles, owing partly to the heavy sea which drove through the Kurile passages, and partly to a strong current which continually sets to the SE through the Lopatka Straits. It is this current which renders the passage to and from Okotsk much more tedious than it otherwise would be. The first, or Lopatka Channel, is now seldom or never attempted, owing to the repeated accidents which have happened to the transports. There is now an order from the Admiralty to the contrary, throwing the onus upon the officer in charge. The channel, as far as I am able to judge, is not half so dangerous nor so narrow as that of the Needles at the Isle of Wight. The whole of this hemisphere demands a surveying

expedition, as well as practical sailors to traverse it, for till then imaginary dangers will be shunned, while real ones remain unknown.

Driven to the SE 4° of latitude as well as of longitude, we awaited a SE gale, when we were enabled, with good management, to run within a quarter of a mile of the breakers, though in the greatest danger of suffering shipwreck, which would, in such circumstances, have left no one alive to tell the dismal tale. The vessel was crowded with live lumber, men, women, and children, all with horror depicted upon their countenances. Our situation was by no means pleasant. Our course was West, a heavy Kurilian fog attended us, we had already passed what appeared two islands, but which in fact were two hills on one island. Land was observable a-head, and we hauled up SW, going eight knots, and the spray at this time from the breakers within fifty yards of us. The gale veered to NE—observed the land again from SSW to W—hauled up SSE land still a-head, when from a hard gale and heavy sea it fell, almost miraculously, calm, and we found ourselves in smooth water. Fourteen feet were gained by the lead, and the anchor was thrown out with success. The night proved dark and dismal, yet we held on, in perfect ignorance of our situation, latterly even the land was not visible though the breakers were. A small rock lay N by E, and a reef S by E, extending to SW. The surf from the island extended to WNW,

leaving us only a west course in the event of any accident to our cables. The morning broke with a cloudless sky, and discovered our situation to have been such that nothing but the intervention of Providence could have saved a single life on board the vessel if the gale had continued. We had no alternative betwixt struggling through breakers, or being dashed to pieces against rocky precipices.

The large bay into which we had been thus driven, is no where described in any chart, which is the more extraordinary, as it lies near the principal Kurile channel. It is to this hour unknown, for we did not survey it, although it has been passed within a few miles by the annual transports for the last hundred years. Our situation proved to be on the SE side of the third island, and S of a large bay in the centre. Four small rocky isles bore from N to NE $\frac{1}{2}$ N, about a mile distant. A long reef had its extreme east point ENE about nine miles. The hollow in the centre of the isle bore NNW. And the eastern extreme of the southern shore, SE $\frac{1}{2}$ S; while a sunken rock and bank was from us S by E about half a mile distant, consequently the main land ran from NE. to SE. round by the W. There was plenty of water for our vessel all round us: a clear channel lay round the rock to the S by E, and another to the west of the northern reef, distant from the main land three miles. As we had come in, there must necessarily be a passage out, and that passage I proposed as the most certain by which to get safely out. The

latitude at noon, was 50° 26′, and the proper entrance to the bay is in that latitude between the long reef nine miles from the brig's then station, and the islands, hauling up to the south, and thus it may be made a safe bay.

We hove short the anchor, and drove close to the breakers; let go a second anchor under foot, and at length, by casting the right way, made sail and cut away. The SE current, and the tardiness of the crew were still to be borne with as we passed parallel to the reef at fifty or sixty yards. We gained an offing and continued to beat about until the twentieth day from our leaving Avatcha: on that day we passed the third channel, but light easterly airs detained us till the twenty-fifth. On the thirty-third day we made the port of Okotsk, and reached the anchorage of the outer bay. On the thirty-fourth I landed in a tremendous surf at the risk of my life. I felt anxious to get ashore, and in spite of recals and signals, passed safely through a surf which swallowed up six out of twelve of a boat that also subsequently attempted it; finding the surf near me I continued straight on, while the other boat attempted to turn, and reaped the disastrous consequences. The chief of Kamtchatka with his family and my wife landed the following day upon the outer beach, and the brig on the third reached the harbour in safety.

From this relation of my voyage I should feel greatly pleased if I could draw the attention of the Russian government to the propriety and ne-

cessity, not only of surveying generally the Kurile islands, but particularly those extending from Cape Lopatka to the latitude of 46°. It is within that compass that the transports from and to Okotsk and Kamtchatka pass the Kurile straits. I had occasion last year to notice, what I considered an error in the geographical position of the third and fourth Kurile islands; this year I repeated my observations with somewhat more precision in consequence of the light airs and calms which attended us for some time. The latitude of the fifth island is certainly wrong: at noon on the 24th July, O. S. we were in latitude 49° 33′, at which time the most northern part of the island bore W by N, at about four leagues; at the same time that the island lying to the westward of it was one point open to the north. This could not have been the case if the charts had been correct: every allowance for the error in Admiral Kruzensterne's chart may however be passed over in silence; as he did not survey this part nor indeed any so far north.

The second channel is certainly the preferable one when bound from Okotsk into the Eastern Ocean, because although it is formed by four islands, and is generally attended by fogs, it can always be run for, as a fair wind is a clear wind. Going, however, from Kamtchatka to Okotsk the third channel is the better, as it is formed by two lofty, though small islands, and has considerably less fog and current. Calms, or gales, heavy fogs,

strong and changeable currents prevail in these seas and render the navigation, in the hands of those generally employed, tedious and perilous; indecision and incapacity marking every act. The government deserve credit for their late liberality in settling the establishment of Okotsk, still, however, much remains to be done. The encouragement held out to young officers to induce them to serve in this part of the world, is generous; but there is yet wanting encouragement to officers who are already initiated into the practical, as well as theoretical, part of a seaman's duty. As the case is, none but boys from the college are sent, who getting the command of a vessel before they have even been afloat, are obliged to confide in the under officers, and all subordination ceases, except that which is enforced by hasty punishment, for starting has found its way from the navy of England to that of the Eastern Ocean.

Having once more reached the continental part of Asia, I began to prepare for my journey to Yakutsk. In the mean time, every attention and kindness was renewed to me by my old friend the chief and his amiable lady. Many considerable additions and improvements to the town and port of Okotsk had been made during my absence. The buildings belonging to the American Company had been transported from the ground on which they were constructed to the new town, having been framed and prepared at the old town, on account of

the proximity of the workmen, as well as the difficulty and danger in crossing the mouth of the harbour during summer. A new brig had been prepared, and was now ready to launch. Two large flats had been built for transporting flour across the bay. A sort of custom and warehouse had been erected for the use of the merchants, the receipts of which are given to the support of the poor, and two magnificent magazines, a post-house, and other buildings, together with five thousand large trees in the dock-yard, have been added through the activity of Captain Ushinsky. I may confidently say that were the same industry and knowledge to be continued in operation for five years longer, Okotsk would not cede in regularity, cleanliness, or durability of buildings, to any wooden town in Siberia except Barneoule.

It is a pity that a dry dock is not formed for laying up the transports during the winter. The means are ample, the rise and fall of the regular tide very considerable, and the ultimate advantages are incalculable. The duty at the port is heavy, owing to a want of officers, artificers, and sailors. The correspondence with Irkutsk is enough for a government, much more for so small a place. Two vessels belonging to the American Company arrived during my stay in Okotsk, one in ballast, and the other almost empty, having but two thousand river otters on board. It is incomprehensible why this body do not fit out small craft for the purpose of

taking seals on and round the Isle of Ayon; its distance from Okotsk is about one hundred and fifty miles, and the interval would, no doubt, be the most thriving scene of their adventures. Who is the director of the concern I know not, but am quite certain that by visiting the establishment once in three years he might do much good, and prevent more robbery.

Being fully prepared for my journey to Yakutsk, distant seven or eight hundred miles, we departed on the evening of the 27th of August, a very late period of the year, crossing the Great Bay and encamping for the night at Bulgeine, near the remains of an old hospital, then in a fine situation, but lately removed to a worse one, in the town. It ought, at least, to be still used for those that are in a convalescent state, having the advantage of a better air, some vegetables, and plenty of milk. The following morning our ca·van amounted to near two hundred horses. I had thirteen besides a couple of tents, one for my guides and Cossack, the other for myself. Provisions were laid in for six weeks, as nothing is to be procured upon the road except flesh meat. My present situation upon leaving Okotsk was too different from the last to escape my observation. Then I was wandering about alone, careless of the past, unconcerned for the future, and, like the brute creation, alive only to the present hour. Now, with a young wife to protect through an execrable journey on horseback, and ex-

posed to the severity of winter, I felt, and felt deeply, that prudence and foresight were peculiarly necessary. She, who had only seen three or four horses in her life, was consequently not a little terrified; but what will not perseverance overcome? The difficulties she encountered in this and the subsequent journeys were such as would have shaken the most robust, and bore very hard upon her delicate frame.

From Bulgeine we made ten miles, halting on the banks of the Okota. Our route thence lay over a well wooded, but swampy country. At thirty miles, we parted from the amiable chief of Kamtchatka, who was about to return to the peninsula in company with his successor, agreeably to orders from Saint Petersburg. The third day we reached Meta on the Okota, and I enjoyed highly the very fine scenery about it. On the fourth day, what with rising late and halting early for the accommodation of the ladies, of whom there were six in our caravan, we made but twenty miles, and encamped upon the banks of the Urak, which I shall remember equally with the Arko; the former for endangering the life of my wife, and the latter, of my own. My wife had a good horse, but had imprudently exchanged it to try a second, and a worse. She was thrown with such violence as to lie for twelve hours senseless and speechless; but, thanks to Providence and to two sons of Æsculapius, who were journeying with us, she recover-

ed in a great degree, though she has ever since been liable to a pain in the right temple. The next forenoon we resumed our journey along a picturesque valley, watered by the Urak, which we forded nine times in a distance of forty miles. The country, like the numerous islands in the river, was well covered with poplars and birches, intermixed with larches. The number of rivers and branches of rivers that are forded and passed upon the journey from Yakutsk to Okotsk is quite inconceivable. Captain Minitsky told me there were not less than a thousand.

We now got into the land of wild berries, especially of currants; the tracks of bears and wolves were also discernible. We passed the half-way-house to Krestova, and following a route through a forest of fine timber, pitched our tents, and received the first real salutation of winter in a heavy fall of snow: this was on the second of September. Thus, in one short night, from the beauties of autumn, we were involved in the dreariness of winter. The following, a tremendous stormy day, we made, with great difficulty, twenty miles, and reached a halting-place half frozen, and more than half drowned, from the frequent necessity of fording lakes and rivers. Our halting-place was near a deep swamp, which was perilously waded by the whole party. The weather next day was such, that we remained in our tents, and employed ourselves in drying our clothes, &c. after which we bade

adieu to the Urak, which rises not far hence, and falls into the sea of Okotsk, not far south of the city, at the salt-work establishment. We reached, in a hard frost, the river Udoma, where we were detained, owing to the late snows and rains having swollen the river to an unusual size. I had succeeded in crossing, but my horse not being in a condition to take me back, I could not return, and was thus cut off from the rest of the party for the night. An axe being always suspended from my saddle, and a flint and steel being always round my waist, I made a good fire, and passed the night as well as could be expected. At the halting-place we met with a priest going to Okotsk; he had been forty-six days upon the road owing to the overflowed state of the country. There are times when seventy and even eighty days are necessary to perform the journey, the rate of progress being confined to five and six miles a day.

With much labour, and considerable apprehension on the part of the women, we crossed the Udoma, my wife being towed over the stream on horseback by two Yakut guides. Seven miles beyond, we reached Udoma Cross, where an under officer of the Cossacks resides, with a few Yakuti; the station serves for a post-house, has also a magazine of flour, and the person in charge has the command of a great number of Yakuti. Its situation is bleak and exposed, but is advantageous on account of the fish and game, as well as from hav-

ing the most beautiful pastures in its neighbourhood. From Udoma Cross there is a water communication to Yakutsk, by means of the Udoma, which falls into the Aldan; the latter of which ultimately enters the Lena. This aquatic communication is not so much attended to as formerly, when all the stores for Captains Behring's and Billing's expedition were thus forwarded with success. It would seem that the Russian government are not now so forward as formerly in patronizing water-communications. The whole distance from Yakutsk to Okotsk might be accomplished by large canoes, except the passage of one chain of mountains, which confine the Arko, a large stream uniting with the Okota. The whole distance from hence to the Aldan by the Udoma is six hundred miles, while the direct course is about one hundred and eighty; the voyage is, however, performed in five or six days.

We procured at Udoma a supply of fresh meat and wild berries, and having fed the horses well and rested them for a couple of days, we resumed the journey towards Alack Youna, a distance of one hundred and thirty miles, part of which lay over half frozen rivers and swamps, along a picturesque valley. The first day our party lost three horses by excess of fatigue, and from the ice giving way under them. The country was well wooded, and as we continued, some tall firs were seen mixed with the larches and alders. We continued along

the valley, making from fifteen to thirty-five miles per day. The cold had increased to 6° of Reaumur. The fifteenth day we reached the Outchakan. Our halting-place commanded a most magnificent panorama of mountain-scenery: the river branched out into numerous shallow channels, whose rippling, joined to the murmur of the wind against the trees, adds a pensive air to the sublimity of the scene. The hills rise one above another in a regular succession to a great height, and the whole appears one of the most secluded and desolate spots I have ever witnessed. In so cold a place I never saw so much and such fine timber, which, lying at the foot of the hills and in the numerous valleys, and gradually diminishing as they reach the more exposed places, give an air of picturesque beauty, seldom to be met with in so high a latitude. All was still, save the murmur of the waters and of the trees; not a voice was to be heard, nor a creature to be seen, but of our own party; no fire, not even a charity yourte—in short, nothing to greet the arrival of the weary traveller in a spot where eternal winter reigns. A cold north wind for ever sweeps through the valley, destroying almost every species of vegetation: and such is the extreme rigor of the climate, that solid massive ice is to be seen even in the months of July and August. When we crossed the centre of the valley and the river, the thermometer stood at 16° of Reaumur's frost, and the ice-banks on the river were twenty and twenty-four

inches thick. To the religious or philosophic mind this may be a safe retreat, the cares of the world being certainly far removed from it, as during nine months in the year nothing but a monthly post-Cossack comes within some miles of it. We lost four horses from the effects of the frost, and resumed the journey as we could, along a succession of valleys for twenty miles, when we halted at the foot of a tremendous ravine formed by two high mountainous precipices. We lost five more horses, though good pasture was to be had, every thing bearing the most wintry appearance.

Henceforth our progress became tedious, uncertain, and very laborious, as the remaining horses were so heavily laden. We entered the next day on the valley and river of Anchekon amidst much snow, but in warmer weather. On the 13th (25th) September, we crossed an elevated chain of hills, whose precipitous or steep ascents gave us much trouble: these hills separate the two governments of Yakutsk and Okotsk. We reached the river Achan, which falls into the Youna, receiving also the Anchekon, and ultimately all uniting in the Aldan, Lena, and frozen sea. It was late when we reached the post station, called Alack Youna, having come twenty-five miles of most execrable road.

The country now assumed a more lively and picturesque appearance. Lofty ranges of table lands superseded the conical or triangular mountains, a noble pasture plain lay before us, and abundance of

timber and hay-stacks were every where to be seen. This is indeed an eligible place for a post-house, which is established on the left, or south bank of the river. We staid two days to refresh man and beast, and on the 15th (27th) reached at fifteen miles a narrow defile, where we ascended and descended six steep and dangerous hills, after which we halted on the banks of the Konkui, which also unites with the Aldan. Rising early the following morning we made thirty miles, fifteen of which were along a narrow and deep ravine, and the other half over three steep and lofty mountain passes, the summits of which afforded a most extensive but dreary prospect. The thermometer at the most elevated point stood at 12° of frost. Having crossed the mountains we reached the land of evergreens—the pine, and fir: an agreeable relief to eyes which had so long dwelt on nothing but desolation. Leaving the Konkui to the right, along the banks of which is the proper route, we crossed at ten miles an elevated mountain range. We had adopted this route in consequence of the lateness of the season, but there are in that river forty-six places to be forded, a task which our horses, in their present state, could not perform. We made near thirty miles, but the baggage did not arrive until midnight, twenty-three horses being knocked up, and six more having dropped dead on the road. I could not but pity the distress of the poor Yakuti, at being thus compelled to forsake their favourite cattle.

We met the post from Yakutsk, and in the course of an hour more we were overtaken by that from Okotsk: the latter had been encountered by a bear, which had destroyed most of the letters and papers. The journal of Captain Vassilieff's Expedition, in particular, had suffered much. There was also a considerable sum of paper money in the post, but this happily escaped injury. We reached Tchornoi Liess, or Black Wood, the following day. The road was at first along the little river Chakdalka, and then on the White River, both uniting with the Aldan, until we reached Chekonoi, or the Weeping Country, so called from the Yakuti losing so many horses in its swampy and half frozen marshes: out of my thirteen four were knocked up. The pasture is good, but the horses treading it are embayed in the deep swampy part so long, that the frost fastening on and penetrating their feet, causes their certain death. The stench from the dead carcases is at times distinctly perceptible, and the carcases of the numerous horses thus frozen attracts many bears to the place. At Black Wood there is a post-house, magazine for flour, and three yourtes, in an open country fifty miles from the Aldan.

From this great loss of horses I was obliged to forward my wife on in charge of the Cossack, and remain to bring up the baggage, and buy or exchange horses as could best be done, for the benefit of my Yakuti. I remained for thirty-six hours

bargaining, and at length having procured three fresh horses, overtook the party before they reached the Aldan. The last twenty-five miles is over a continual wooden causeway, in many parts in so wretched a condition that it is dangerous for horses to go by it; the country was a most dreary, low, swampy and brush wood place. A good ferry the next day took us across the Aldan at a part which is three quarters of a mile broad. Afterwards over a well wooded and picturesque country we reached a most comfortable yourte, twenty-five miles beyond the river. We now began to feel the effects of fatigue and cold, and continual exposure to the open air. When I say we, I should except myself, for I never was better or more contented, but I considered the situation of the females on horseback with 15° to 18° of frost, without a hut or covering to receive them, and passing the night in the snow, as no ordinary circumstances. To me a tent has less of pleasantness than the open air, and I preferred lying down to windward of a fire, changing sides as one became frozen or the other roasted. The season was, however, so far advanced, that we apprehended the danger of being detained on the right bank of the Lena for a month or more; it was therefore resolved to push on.

From the Aldan the country becomes a fine and open park-scenery; many interesting prospects strike the attention of the traveller, and the quantity of cattle is a sensible relief. We reached, and

were ferried over the Amgha, a large stream, uniting with the Aldan. Passing many lakes, abounding with a small but delicious carp, we reached on the third day a post-house, where we procured kibitkis. The severe frost and heavy falls of snow, combined with the flatness of the country over which our future track lay, rendered the journey more expeditious and agreeable; and we were enabled to reach two stations, or forty miles, over a country not unaptly termed, as far as regards scenery, the Siberian Caucasus; for, although not so elevated, the scenery is most romantic, and carries with it many rural charms not to be looked for in such a part of the world. The inhabitants I found at every part of my journey civil, obliging, and hospitable; and if we met one who was knowing, cunning or knavish, and accused of being such, he would readily retort by asking, Who taught the Yakuti to be knaves?

Horses had now become so scarce, that our baggage was drawn by oxen. For my own share, out of thirteen horses, only one was able to reach Yakutsk. I mention the circumstance, that my readers may be fully aware what a terrible undertaking it is for the traveller, and what a cruel one upon the unhappy Yakut and still more unhappy horse.

The forty miles we made the following day, placed within our reach a flour magazine, a grog-shop, and a pedler's stall. There are many Ya-

kuti settled in the neighbourhood, abundance of horned cattle are every where to be seen, and the quantity of hay collected for them is prodigious. We had now but eighty miles left, forty of which were accomplished on the 27th of September, O.S. over a low, flat, swampy country, after which, through a crowded forest, we reached the banks of the Lena. The latter part of this day's journey reminded me of Old England, the very regular fences and hedges presenting an appearance of economy and thrift which I had not witnessed for a long time. Upon the 1st of October we reached the city of Yakutsk at a time that the river was almost impassable from the quantity of heavy floating ice. Good and comfortable quarters had been prepared for me through the kindness of the chief who had recently arrived. I discharged my Yakuti, well satisfied with their conduct, although two of them and the Cossack managed to consume, independent of four quarters of their ox beef and one horse, which was killed, six poods of beef, or near four hundred weight. It may not be improper in this stage to give some idea of the character of the Yakuti, and of their numbers.

They are evidently of Tartar origin, as their language is understood by the Tartars of Kazan. Their complexion is a light copper colour; they are generally of low stature, with more regular and pleasing features than the Tongusi: they are more hospitable, good tempered and orderly, but

neither so honest nor so independent; they have a servility, a tameness, and a want of character, which assimilates them, in some measure, to the despicable Kamtchatdales. The more a Yakut is beaten, the more he will work; touch a Tongoose, and no work will be got from him. The Yakuti are very ingenious, and excellent mechanics; they make their own knives, guns, kettles, and various iron utensils. They are patient under fatigue, and can resist great privations. They are, like the Tongousi, great gluttons, but subsist mostly upon horse flesh; a mare being considered by them as the greatest delicacy; but never slaughtered except in sacrifice to a Shamane.

Their riches consist in large herds of horses and horned cattle, besides an abundance of the finest and most valuable furs. They also carry on a considerable trade among themselves, and some of their princes are immensely rich, doing business to the amount of one hundred and fifty thousand roubles a year, and yet living in the same misery as their servants, sleeping in the same apartment, which perhaps contains forty or fifty people. Their dress differs little from that of the neighbouring tribes, being made of rein-deer skins for the rich, and horses' hides for the poorer class. Many of them still subsist entirely on fishing and hunting. Their greatest luxuries are tea, tobacco, and spirits. They sit crossed legged. The greater part of them are converted to Christianity, and the

clergymen in many places deliver their sermons in the Yakut dialect. Indeed so fashionable is it, that in the best society at Yakutsk, the Yakut dialect is used for all private conversation, or in the presence of an European officer.

Their yourtes are comfortable, and upon the arrival of a guest are made as clean as clean straw can make them; in other respects they are disgusting enough, being but too frequently filled with vermin. Their yourtes differ from all the others I have seen, consisting of one large apartment and a cow-house adjoining. The mode of constructing their dwellings is as follows: nine posts are driven into the ground in the form of a square, the three in the centre being higher than the others; on these posts they lay three beams, while the four corner posts are connected by two other cross beams. Stout planks are then placed sloping from the earth to the horizontal beams to which they are fastened, while other planks are also laid sloping from the upper part of the roof to the side-posts, overlapping the others. Grass, mould, and dung are then plastered over them in lieu of caulking, and the walls are banked up with the same materials, fenced in during winter. The heat in the yourte is preserved by means of the snow which becomes hardened to such a degree as to resist the fire and smoke from the chimney, blocks of ice are placed in the sides of the windows, and give a clear transparent light; though sometimes bladders or oiled paper, as well as a particular species of a fossil, call-

ed Vitrum Ruthenicum Maria, glass, or talc, serve for the same purpose. Three sides of the interior are divided into partitions, two or three living in each, according to the size of the family, and are used as bed places; they are three or four feet wide and ten long. In the centre is the hearth and chimney, formed by upright sticks, plastered on the inside. The wood is placed in an upright direction on the hearth, and the fire is kept up constantly day and night. The state apartment, and of course that occupied by the chief guest, is the farthest from the door, and immediately under the image. The odour from the cow-house, although disagreeable, is considered very healthy, and far preferable to mixing with thirty or forty people, whose stench and filth are inconceivable. With only a few inmates and additional cleanliness, I consider a Yakut dwelling to be extremely convenient and peculiarly fresh and wholesome. Their kitchen utensils are not numerous; a large iron kettle or boiler, a large tea-kettle, and a few wooden bowls and spoons, with still fewer earthen jars, and a knife for each person, constitute the whole. The richer Yakut may have a samavar or tea-urn, and perhaps in such case a tea-pot also, but in general the tea is made in the kettle. They use no plates, but taking a large piece of beef in their left hand, they secure it with their teeth, and then cut away as much with the right as will fill the mouth; some warm melted butter finishes the repast, when the pipe and tobacco come in as a dessert.

The population of the government of Yakutsk, as appears by the official return, is as follows:—In the circle or commissariat of

	Males.	Females.
Yakutsk	42,853	44,193
The Kolyma	2,384	2,155
Villuifsky	17,477	17,419
Zashiversky	5,168	4,901
Olekminsk	4,539	4,443
Convicts and white people, &c. in the different commissariats	23,230	19,905
	95,651	93,016
Total	188,667	

Of these probably about one hundred and thirty thousand are Yakuti, the rest Tongousi, or Lamutki, and Russians.

Again settled in Yakutsk, I had time to walk about and see all that is worth seeing; if my former opinion of it was bad, it is now worse. The only alteration being that some of the churches and the monastery have been white washed. There are about a dozen respectable looking houses, the inmates of which are not even on speaking terms with one another. The little charm there was in the society of the place during the reign of Captain Minitsky is now entirely dissipated. There is now no difference betwixt fast and feast days, and the number of the parties and opinions in the city is almost equal to that of the inhabitants. Captain Mi-

nitski kept a liberal table, and furnished every possible incentive to society. He was altogether the proper chief for the city of Yakutsk. The present amiable governor is a widower, a circumstance which cannot fail of rendering him unpopular with the fair sex, which includes a great number of sprightly and handsome girls. Probably no place has better means for forming agreeable evening parties than Yakutsk, and yet it seems that the envy and jealousy entertained against individual members of each other's families, is so prevalent, that one merchant will not associate with another; all seems distrust and intrigue —each aiming to become the chief's favourite merchant, for upon that circumstance much consequence is attached. The number and the wealth of the principal inhabitants is such that a chief by a wise, liberal, and independent policy, may amass a very considerable fortune. It is not long since that a governor kept open house: his table was at all times laid for twenty, and the evenings were passed at cards and billiards. No Yakut from a distant village entered his house without receiving his day's food, a dram, a pound of tobacco, and a night's lodging. The result was, that when his birth or saint's day arrived, the merchants and Yakut princes agreed that he had a noble heart, that he spent more money than he received, and that therefore it was necessary to reimburse him, and instead of receiving twelve or fifteen thousand roubles worth of skins upon the day of his feast, he re-

ceived probably forty thousand; and by these spontaneous offerings of the inhabitants, he is said to have gone away the richest chief ever known. His name I shall not consider myself at liberty to mention, as I believe he is still living.

Nothing noticeable occurred to us here, with the exception of a few visits I made to the chief, and also to Mrs. Rikord, in whose company we had come from Okotsk. She resided with a Mr. Paul Berezin, the most liberal and agreeable man in the city, from whom I received every attention.

CHAPTER XIII.

Departure from Yakutsk — Tastakinskoi — Olekma — Berezova — Vittim — Kirenga — Kachouga — Bratsky Steppe — Verkholensk — Re-arrival at Irkutsk — The Angara River — The Baikal Lake — Verchey Udinsk — Selenginsk, and the Missionary station at that place.

In this inert state I passed two heavy months at Yakutsk. The cold latterly became severe, the thermometer falling to 32° and 35° of Reaumur, yet never so low as to compel me to put on more than my ordinary clothing, consisting of shoes, worsted stockings, coat, waistcoat, trowsers, and hat. While others wore caps, warm boots, cloaks, and mittens, I even went without gloves. My time was principally employed in preparing a vehicle to enable me to reach Irkutsk when the Lena should become bearable. The first sledges which left the city were those of a lieutenant of the navy, of the name of Novosiltsoff. He departed on the 12th of November, and I on the 15th. It was considered very late in comparison with other years, when the Lena is generally frozen so as to allow of travelling on the 1st of November.

The first twenty-four hours I reached Tastakinskoi, one hundred and twenty, and Kiesick the following day, one hundred miles. The road proved very bad, otherwise it is no uncommon thing in this part of the world to traverse three hundred and

sixty or three hundred and eighty versts, i. e. more than two hundred miles a day. Indeed it is a well known fact that in the winter season the present Emperor takes but forty-two or forty-three hours in travelling from St. Petersburg to Moscow, a distance of about four hundred and twenty miles. The scenery had little or no interest. There occurred some parhelia, or mock suns, but they were faint. The cause of this phenomena I do not pretend to understand, but it seems to me to be a double reflection from the effects of the atmosphere. The weather during such phenomena, I have remarked to be very cold, very clear, and the atmosphere filled with small crystal spiculæ. I am not aware that parhelia are ever seen at sea in the high latitudes, but if so, it cannot be from the effects of snow. Many parhelia have also been visible in England at a time when there was no snow. I should conceive hence, that from whatever cause the phenomena may spring, it must be the same which discovers to us the sun, when beneath the horizon, and this I should term reflection, rather than refraction.

Upon the fourth day I reached Olekma, four hundred miles, and for a trifling sum exchanged vehicles, mine having become injured. Situated at the foot of an elevated range of hills, the town of Olekma, at the conflux of two streams, has an interesting appearance. The inhabitants are employed in fishing, hunting, and trade. The wea-

ther thus far had much favoured us, the thermometer never having exceeded 20°, while at Yakutsk we had once 35°. Much snow fell the following day, in which we reached one hundred and twenty miles, passing through the little village of Berezova, which is the most northern on the Lena, producing rye-flour. We reached Jerbat the following day, and again ascended the hill to view the cave; the fatigue necessary to ascend this short precipice was such, and the effects of the cold from the cave upon my perspiration so great, that I was obliged to desist from the attempt I had contemplated, viz. to furnish myself with a firebrand, and be lowered down into it by a rope. The road hence became very narrow and bad, so much so, that the lower part of the carriages were twice broken and exchanged. So slight, however, is the consequence of such a circumstance that three shillings is sufficient to procure a complete refit. The stages upon approaching Vittim are too heavy and long, the horses have to go from thirty, to forty miles: but what must be the suffering of the driver in a frost of 30° to 45°, even in a perfect calm? The speed of travelling is so great that the mere act of passing through the atmosphere is insufferable; the risk of travelling is thus considerably increased, as the drivers cannot look before them, but are obliged to turn their heads and let the horses go at will. There is no difference between passing, at a rapid rate, through a clear

and still atmosphere, and through a sharp wind at a slow one. In general my drivers arrived frost-bitten, and in some instances severely so.

Upon the 22d November, O. S. I reached Vittim, the half-way house to Irkutsk, celebrated for producing the finest sables in the world. I have seen a pair sold for twenty pounds; those, however, are of the first quality, too scarce to allow many people to have cloaks of them, even if they inclined to go to the expense. There is also an inconceivable difficulty in selecting one hundred sables of the same size and colour, as is requisite to form a handsome cloak; probably ten thousand would be necessary. A cloak of the kind would then be worth at least twenty thousand roubles, or one thousand pounds. From Vittim we encountered very severe weather, the thermometer varying from 32° to 38°; the roads were however good, and our daily route was about one hundred miles. The days were passed in the most dreary and monotonous manner, even the celebrated Cheeks of the Lena afforded no interest at this season. These are cliffs upon each side of the Lena between Kirenga and Vittim, which seem to have been severed from each other by some convulsion of nature, and present a remarkable appearance. We generally halted at eight in the morning to boil a kettle for tea, which, with some hard bread and dried fish, constituted our breakfast. Our dinner was also of tea, and supper only varied from breakfast in the addi-

tion of some stewed beef; these were the only intervals which we took for rest. I found by experience that my wife could bear the fatigue of the journey better than myself, therefore I was unwilling to lengthen the time for my own personal convenience.

Upon the 25th November, we entered the government of Irkutsk, and although we were now with little or no moon, we were still enabled to continue the journey by night, as at every twenty or thirty yards, small branches of trees or bushes are placed, whose green foliage contrasting with the snow, serves to direct the driver. There is moreover but one path, on each side of which the ice lies in large masses, thrown in every direction by the force or rippling of the current.

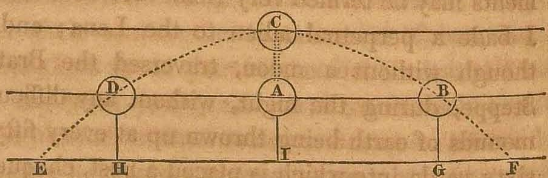
I reached Kirenga on the twelfth day of our departure, on the last stage to which I overtook a doctor and the clerks of the American Company, who preferred sleeping, to the passage of one dangerous stage in the night. Lieutenant Novosiltsoff had written upon the walls of the post-house, that the *ne plus ultra* of bad roads was at hand; my friends were in great apprehension of these dangers, till I observed that Lieutenant Novosiltsoff would hardly return by such a bad road merely to advise others, and therefore unless he did so, he could not have written what bore his name. It was late when I arrived, but as they persisted in remaining, I thought no time was to be lost in keeping the ad-

vantage of being a-head, aware as I was, that Mrs. Rikord was close behind us, with a superior power to procure horses. The station proved no farther dangerous than that the ice was only about three or four inches thick. It cracked as we slid along it, but no accident happened.

At Kirenga I was detained twelve hours, owing to the chiefs of the three departments having kept up Saturday night rather merrily, so as not to be able to enter my passport in the book for that purpose, or to enable me to proceed without it. Kirenga is one of those few places thus misgoverned, although the town-major is a good sort of a man when sober. He called upon me afterwards, and seemed inclined to be angry with and to report the secretary of the post-master for giving me and my wife an asylum in a warm apartment of the post-office, contrary to regulations, but which in fact the secretary had taken upon himself to do, with the most humane consideration, seeing the incapability of his chiefs to provide us either with passports, horses or lodgings. On his coming to his senses, I made no other remonstrance with him than merely saying, that he might save himself the trouble, as I should take especial care to represent the whole transaction to the governor-general. Kirenga is a dear place: meat twelve shillings and bread two, for thirty-six pounds; and fish, and animals of the chase, both scarce. It serves, however, to keep up the communication with Yakutsk, as well as to en-

able it to be said that there are *two* towns on the Lena!—which runs a course of three thousand miles.

From Kirenga a fine road and good horses enabled us to extend our daily progress to one hundred and fifty miles. On the second day after leaving it I was favoured, for the last time, with parhelia, in a much more beautiful and singular manner than any I had before witnessed, and shall endeavour to describe them. There were three mock suns, one on each side, and of the same altitude as the real sun, and a very faint one just over it, at the same perpendicular distance above the real sun, as that was above the horizon. The mock suns, east and west of the real one, for it was near noon, bore a fiery red appearance upon those parts nearest to the real sun, while the outer edges of them were gradually shaded to a whitish colour. A slightly curved line of light connected the parhelia, passing through their centres to the horizon, and forming the figure of a rainbow, the sun being in the centre of the arch.



The reader will observe that the distance from A to I, from A to C, from B to G, and from D to H ap-

peared to be equal; but from A to D and from A to B much greater; the latter being the cause of the rainbow assuming an oval appearance. The strength of the rays from the real sun was very great; and I could only regret that the subsequent part of my journey, lying along a narrow defile of mountains, obstructed the view of so interesting a phenomenon. The weather was very cold, with a cloudless sky. The wind, or rather the light air, was from the SSW.

Upon the third day, after leaving Kirenga, I reached Kachouga, and then passing through the large and populous village of Verkholensk, and a beautiful country, producing some good corn and more hay, we reached the Bratsky Steppe or desert. Civility and hospitality upon this part of the road are carried even to excess.—I found the elders of the villages ready to shew me every attention, and even begging me to pass a night in their comfortable isbas, or dwellings. The country abounds in cattle of all descriptions peculiar to this northern part of the world, and the settlements may be termed very rich. At Verkholensk I bade a perpetual adieu to the Lena; and although without a moon, traversed the Bratsky Steppe, during the night, without any difficulty, mounds of earth being thrown up at every fifty or sixty yards, into which is placed a post, chequered black and white, or a black post with a white head. Both are termed, I think very undeservedly,

Paul's folly: they are very useful to travellers, and are worthy to be well spoken of. The post-houses now became far superior to any we had passed farther to the north, and more respectful attendance was shewn us at every place as we approached the capital, a fact certainly in direct contradiction to general observation and experience.

Passing over the Bratsky Steppe, we met immense herds of horses and horned cattle, who stopped, and even approached to gaze at us as we galloped over the theatre of their independent evolutions. Upon the morning of the 17th day we reached Irkutsk in time to breakfast with my old friend Captain Koutigin, the chief of the navy at this *port*. After breakfast I presented myself to his excellency the governor, Tzedler, who not only proffered the same attentions and assistance as before, but also insisted upon my accepting apartments in his elegant and hospitable mansion, appropriated to the residence of the governor. I felt truly grateful for this last act of kindness, as the elegant accomplishments of his lady, his sister, and his daughter, were such as not only make them models for imitation in Siberia, but ensure them the respect of the first circles. I felt that my wife, young and ignorant of the world, could not fail, in their society, to acquire many of those little nameless graces, so necessary to form the female character.

In company with my hospitable and excellent

host, I waited upon the governor-general, Mr. Lavinsky. I was received with much hospitality and friendship, and was promised every assistance in the furtherance of my views; and having expressed a desire to visit Nertchinsk and Kiakhta before I returned to Europe, his Excellency kindly granted the permission. I did not expect so much good fortune; I did not think that a second Speranski was sent to be governor-general, but I found that Mr. Lavinsky possessed great goodness of heart, and an equal degree of amiability, although perhaps less commanding talents; because I believe there are few to be found equal to those of Mr. Speranski, whose condescending kindness to me was brought more forcibly to my recollection by His Excellency's introducing me to a Mr. Strannack, who is distantly related to him, and with whom I enjoyed many pleasant hours. His Excellency, Mr. Speranski, married a niece of that much respected gentleman, Mr. Planta, of the British Museum. Mr. Strannack was about to inspect the post-offices in the governments of Irkutsk and Yakutsk, beginning with the circles of Nertchinsk and Selenginsk, which latter places I was also desirous of visiting; we therefore agreed to travel together, having previously obtained the consent of a Mr. Yakobleff, the chief of this inspecting commission, whom I found an agreeable and amiable companion, and related to the most commercial, enterprising, and wealthy merchants of that name.

The season for commencing this journey was,

however, distant some weeks, as it was not yet possible to cross the Baikal, much less the Angara, neither of which are considered passable before the 1st (or 10th) of January. We therefore continued to enjoy the comforts of Irkutsk, in the same liberal and hospitable manner as I had done upon my outward journey. The public balls had fallen off, but were more than compensated by the private ones given at the houses of five or six individuals. There was, however, a masquerade ball which went off well, as also two or three others in the assembly rooms. The Maslenitza or carnival was a time of much amusement, and many well dressed characters went from house to house, I of course among the merriest if not the best drest. Thus our time passed in a most agreeable manner.

The Angara ceased to roll its waters upon the 1st (13th) of January—that is, the road was declared open on that day, rather earlier than is usual, the 10th (22d) being the time that the merchants commence their journey to Kiakhta. The small quantity of water in the river this year will sufficiently account for the difference. Much mischief is at times occasioned by the heavy swellings of the river previous to its being frozen. The ice crumbles up to a great height, and threatens destruction to the houses upon the beach. There is a peculiar quality attending the Angara, the water of which in summer is so cold, that the thermometer in June was but one degree above the zero

of Reaumur, and in winter the warmest, as also the most rapid of all the rivers in this part of the world. The water is considered as unwholesome, the inhabitants preferring that of the Ushakofsky, which passes near to the Admiralty, and which water is said to be $\frac{1}{20}$ heavier than that of the Angara, the rapidity of which is such, that immense sheets of ice are carried under water; and although during the last six weeks, the thermometer had seldom been above 30° of Reaumur, it was still impassable.

The situation of this thriving city has already been pointed out, and the beauty of its position is evident. It is only by supposing it to stand on very elevated ground, that we can account for such severe frosts as visit it. The latitude is but little north of London, yet are the people obliged to bury themselves in smoke, both in winter and summer, in the one season to guard against the cold, in the other against the vermin. Many improvements and additions in the buildings of the city had taken place during my absence, especially in brick buildings, the erection of which has been of late much encouraged by the government.

I again visited the hospitals and jails, as well as the foundling and work-house. In all of them I could not help admiring the respect and gratitude evinced by both descriptions of unfortunates in favour of Governor Tzedler. The public work-house is an establishment upon a most laudable

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plan, and increasing its revenue and number of inmates in no small ratio. The latter circumstance may not speak much in favour of the mother country, but I believe there are few who form the wish, and few indeed, who will ever return. Eight hundred men, women, and children, now partake of the benefits of the establishment. The public schools do well, especially that upon the Lancasterian system. The want of a seminary for the children of the middling classes is however severely felt; they will not go to the Lancasterian school, and they cannot be admitted into the college of nobles.

The Foundling hospital does not meet with any success. The Russians appear to be ignorant in the mode of governing an institution of the kind, else there would certainly be a different result. The severity of the climate, the inhumanity and negligence of the mothers, and possibly the incapacity of the nurses are all to be considered. Be the fault where it may, scarcely an *instance occurs of a child being reared.* The allowances to the institution are liberal, and it is visited by the first persons in the city, with a view to its ultimate success.

Of all the public offices, that of the Admiralty is conducted with the greatest management and propriety. By this body provisions are forwarded to every part of northern Siberia. Stores in abundance are collected for the use of the dock-yard of Okotsk, and the vessels building and built, do

credit to the government of this part of the world. But why the executive of the empire should permit tar, rope, canvass, iron implements, and many other such heavy articles to be sent from Irkutsk to Okotsk, I cannot divine. A single transport from Russia would carry as much in one year as four thousand horses; and the prices of the stores so sent by land are at least five times what they ought to be. This mode of purchasing stores for the use of Okotsk and Kamtchatka has been the means of filling the pockets of several commandants, owing to the circumstance of their being independent of every body but the Governor-General.

Irkutsk will, no doubt, in the course of a few years become a place of much greater importance to the Russian empire. Its resources would be sufficient even for a capital of an independent kingdom. The population of Siberia is at this moment large enough, and the natural means of defence are amply sufficient even in the present day to withstand an invading army. All the rivers of western and central Siberia run from south to north, and are consequently to be crossed in the face of an enemy. The immense deserts or steppes can be fired at pleasure, and all means of subsistence for cavalry be thus cut off. All provisions for the support of an invading army would have to come from Europe, consequently more horses than men would be required. The situations of many of the chief towns in Siberia are also very strong, and could not be reduced without

artillery. To sum up—all the roads might in a few hours be rendered impassable. The Siberians have only to keep the Kemchouga swamp, and they may defy all the powers of Europe. This is however far from being the time for the emancipation of colonies. The Russians are too happy in them to wish to shake off the yoke; though the aborigines would no doubt wish to see themselves upon some other footing. This, however, will no doubt, occur too late to affect them, as in all common probability, they will be extinct at no very distant period; there are not at this moment under the Russian subjection more than seven or eight hundred thousand. What their numbers were at the discovery and conquest of Siberia, it might be as difficult to determine as the population of the empire of Mexico at the time Cortes invaded it. Supposing generally, that there were several millions, what have become of them?

My stay in Irkutsk occupied me until the 7th of January, when I departed in company with the two Inspectors of the Post. The day was windy, but the road was good, over an open and well cultivated country. The banks of the Angara present some pleasing views, and numerous populous villages are scattered on either side. The eastern bank is low, while the western is prettily diversified with hills. Each cottage has its garden, and a great spirit of industry every where appears. The first forty-five miles brought us to the magnificent view

of the lake Baikal, on the road to which we had met and overtaken thousands of carts and horses going to and coming from the fair of Kiakhta.

The approach to the unfathomable Baikal lake, may be considered one of the grandest sights in the world. The river Angara flows in the fore ground, gradually widening as it draws nearer to the lake, till at length the source of the river forms a pretty inlet, where the vessels for transporting provisions are laid up. The sight of a number of vessels in an apparently good condition was to me a source of great pleasure, and I could only regret that the season would not permit me to embark on board one of them, instead of crossing as at present, in a sledge. The mountains every where round the Baikal are of the most elevated and romantic appearance. They are bold, rocky, and very dangerous for vessels in summer, as no anchorage is any where to be found. The winds are most violent, and subject to instant changes resembling hurricanes. The sea is said to run mountains high, and as the vessels are badly manned and worse officered, it is no wonder that numerous accidents occur. July and August are considered as the worst seasons, May and June are the best; but whether in bad or good seasons, it not unfrequently happens that the transports are twenty-five and thirty days in crossing a distance of fifty miles. It is here that the power of steam would best exhibit its incalculable advantages. A boat might ascend the Angara to

the Baikal, cross that lake, and, entering the Selenga, reach within twelve miles of Kiakhta, and even hold a communication with Nertchinsk. All the flour and provisions for the north would be thus more quickly and safely transported, and the immense traffic facilitated between Irkutsk and the several cities of Kiakhta, Petersburg, and Okotsk. The inattention of government, as well as of the opulent merchants, to this object is truly inconceivable.

Having reached the Baikal, out of which the Angara flows, and into which the Selenga runs, we coasted it for thirty miles before we arrived at the place of crossing. The ice was so clear, transparent, and slippery, that I could not keep my feet, yet the horses are so accustomed to it that hardly an instance occurs of their falling. We crossed the lake, and reached the opposite village, which has a considerable monastery, in time to breakfast; we had been two hours and a half in going the distance, forty miles. Such is, however, the rapidity with which three horses abreast cross this lake, that the late governor of Irkutsk usually did it in two hours—three hours are generally taken. A horse once fallen on the clear ice, I doubt any possibility of getting him upon his legs again. It is dangerous to attempt stopping the horses, nor indeed is it in my opinion possible; if however, the vehicle be stopped on this sort of ice, I almost doubt the possibility of starting it again without

assistance from other people to force the vehicle on from behind. On the other hand, I have seen sledges move so much faster than the horses, as to overtake and turn them short round, and ultimately to form a complete circle.

From the monastery we continued over a low flat pasture to a large Russian village of eighty dwellings. The road side is well cultivated, and we passed several villages before we reached Verchney Udinsk. Latterly the mountains rose into peaks, and threw out some immense bluffs, overhanging the Selenga: they are of bare rock, but the valleys are in fertile situations. We reached Verchney Udinsk, a large, populous, and flourishing city on the right bank of the Selenga, distant from Irkutsk two hundred miles. It has many handsome brick houses, churches, and public edifices, all running at right angles. There are three chiefs in it: the first of them is called an Okroujênoy chief, viz. Inspector of the Circuit, and serves as a check upon the others, his business is to go round the commissariat, to listen to and redress grievances. The second chief is the commissary; he goes round all the commissariat except the city, collects the tribute, and performs all the civil duties. The third is the town-major, who is chief of the city, but has no authority farther. It is evident that these three personages must either disagree, or combine to fleece still more their poor dependents. The appointment of the

first chief is a new regulation. They are all subject to the vice-governor and governor of Irkutsk, who is himself subject to the governor-general.

Verchney Udinsk is the grand mart between Irkutsk and Kiakhta, and has risen upon the ruins of Selenginsk. A very lucrative and considerable trade is carried on round the neighbourhood, with the Buriats, who are very numerous and wealthy in furs and cattle. There is a strong garrison kept up, it being considered as a frontier place, and a daily communication by a formal report is held with Selenginsk. The town contains four hundred houses, and about two thousand six hundred inhabitants. The situation is considered healthy, and is so far pleasant, that there is a very good, though small circle of society. From it to Selenginsk are seventy miles, which I performed along the transparent Selenga in seven hours. The banks of the river bore the most romantic appearance, the hills rising above one another into the loftiest mountains, but presenting no appearance of habitation except in the low valleys. The villages are, however, within four and five miles of each other, along both the banks of the river. I immediately repaired to the abode of the English missionaries settled in this part of the world, and need not say, that I was most kindly received by Messrs. Stallybrass and Youille, with their wives and numerous children; forming as it were an English colony, in the centre of barbarism.

I passed a couple of days in a most agreeable manner, with these secluded and self-devoted people, who have indeed undertaken an arduous task. They have been established in the present place more than three years, and they have erected two neat and homely dwellings, with out-houses, small gardens, &c. It is to the generosity of the Emperor of Russia, that these very comfortable residences are to be attributed, he having generously paid all the expenses, and given the society a grant of land, free of actual rent or public service. The situation itself is in an inappropriate, although a romantic and secluded spot, and as it stands upon the opposite bank of the river to that of the city, the communication is difficult, dangerous, and expensive; but it is now too late to change it. As yet the missionaries have not attempted to raise corn, nor do I think it adviseable; the price of labour would be infinitely greater than the purchase of so small a quantity as they require. They have also much more important work to attend to—I mean the perfecting of themselves in the knowledge of the Mongolian language; and to this point they have attended with great industry, perseverance, and success. They are now almost masters of that difficult language, and when it is considered what have been the perplexities with which they have had to contend, it is really surprising, how they should in so short a time, have nearly completed dictionaries and grammars. While learning the Mongolian lan-

guage, they have also become acquainted with the Mantshur, owing to the circumstance of there being no dictionary of the Mongolian, except with that of the Mantshur. Thus the missionaries had to learn the Russian, Mantshur, and Mongolian languages at the same time, and to form their own dictionaries and grammars, which have the advantage of alphabetical arrangement, over those in former use, in which the words were only classed under their different subjects. They now speak, read, and write the Mongolian with facility. I saw many translations of parts of the New Testament, which have been distributed about the neighbourhood.

Many journeys have been made into the interior of the country, with a view to form acquaintances with the chiefs and principal people, as also with the lamas or priests. As yet, however, it is a matter of regret, that these very indefatigable ministers have not been the instrument of converting *one single* individual. Nor is it probable they will, for it is only very lately, that the Buriats brought their religious books, thirty wagon loads, from Thibet, at an expense of twelve thousand head of cattle. Their tracts have been received, but have never, save in a solitary instance, been looked into. Even their Buriat servants, secretly laugh at the folly of their masters, and only remain with them, for the sake of getting better food, with less work. It appears to me, that the religion of the

Buriats, is of too old a date, and they are of too obstinate a disposition to receive any change. Nor is it much to be wondered at: their own religious books point out the course they pursue; and when the religion of a people, who have been from time immemorial acquainted with the art of reading and writing, is attacked and attempted to be changed by these strangers, it is almost preposterous to expect any favourable result. For my own part, so small are my hopes of their success, that I do not expect any one Buriat will be really and truly converted: for the sake of profit several may so pretend, but as long as they have their own priests and religious instruction, so long the Missionary Society will do no more good than simply translating their works, and acquiring the knowledge of a language useless to England. I must however humbly add, that what is impossible with man is possible with God! The field chosen on the banks of the Selenga is no doubt the very worst; and this is known even to the missionaries, but I presume it is too comfortable a birth to be given up. I have every respect for them personally, but really I cannot think justice is done to the people of England, in squandering money in every part of the world, while there are so many poor and religiously ignorant in our own empire. When we shall have all become good and steady and wealthy Christians, it will be high time to assist others; and thus, in few words, I bid adieu to the subject.

The servants attending the missionaries are Buriats, deserted and detested by all their own countrymen for having forsaken the religion of their fathers, merely for the sake of better food; they are tolerably expert in cooking, washing, and attending table. Generally speaking, the Buriats have such scanty fare, that I am not surprised at their becoming hypocritical. Brick tea forms their ordinary food five days in the week; the poor but seldom taste meat, although they have generally a little fat mixed with their tea, the leaves of which they consume as we do greens, and which thus constitute, upon the whole, a very nourishing dish. The riches of the chiefs consist in large herds of cattle, and some quantities of furs. The number of sheep and goats in this part of the world is prodigious, horned cattle and horses are also very numerous. The Buriats appear a lazy, dirty, but contented race; and quite as unmanly, cowardly, and servile as the Kamtchatdales.

The city of Selenginsk, standing upon the right bank of the river, is indeed a miserably decayed place, art and nature seeming to do their utmost to bury it in oblivion. A garrison of one thousand men is still kept up—to no purpose, for the locality of Verchney Udinsk must soon complete its ruin. It possesses but one respectable merchant, who has consequently an undisputed monopoly of what trade there is.

The city of Selenginsk has suffered much of late,

from two serious fires, and is in other parts tumbling down from the encroachment of the river, which annually makes great inroads. It is but twenty years since the present centre of the river was the centre of the city: the inhabitants have continued to recede as far as possible. Some embankments they made in the early part of last year were washed away in the autumn, and the foundations of many houses will no doubt be destroyed on the next breaking up of the river. There are about two hundred dwellings, and one thousand inhabitants, independent of the military. The vicinity is however very well peopled, and there is much corn raised by some colonies of Poles who were transplanted hither by the Empress Catherine, about 1791. They are the only people I have seen in Siberia, who apply manure to their lands, and doubtless receive it again with interest.

CHAPTER XIV.

Verchney Udinsk—Tchitta—Baidalofsky—Bolshoy Zavod—Nertchinsk—Tsurukhaitouyefsk, Kondou—Tchindat—Khirring—Ashenghinsky—Mogoitu—The Ingoda—Tchitta—The Hot Baths—The Etamza—Return to Verchney Udinsk—The Selenga—Kiakhta.

Having taken our farewell of the missionaries, we retraced our steps to Verchney Udinsk, and felt again gratified with the beauty of the scenery between the two cities, while the rapidity with which we glided along the transparent stream, served not a little to heighten the feeling. Immense mountains of porphyry form the banks of the Selenga, and I have been given to understand that gold is also to be found, but that the natives will give no information for fear of having a mining establishment placed in the vicinity. At Verchney Udinsk the river expands considerably, and the mountains diverge from one another so much as to form a very open and rural country. The pastures are especially rich, and very fine timber is to be had, the small cedar nut is so bountiful as to be exported to all parts of Northern Siberia.

At midnight with my companions, the inspectors, I quitted Verchney, and by eight in the morning we had reached sixty miles towards the town of Nertchinsk, forty of them on the river Uda, which flows into the Selenga near the city of the

same name. The country was picturesque until we entered upon the Buriat Steppe, void of all cultivation and of every thing but rich grass. The road proved very heavy for sledges from the absence of snow. Nothing of the slightest interest is to be seen but solitary post-houses at every twenty or twenty-five miles. In this manner we reached one hundred miles, when my companions called out to rest, as they were really jolted into a fever: I however persisted in continuing the route day and night. At one hundred and fifty miles we called upon one of the chiefs of the Buriats, whose tribe amounts to twenty-three thousand, reputed to be the largest in the government of Irkutsk. This Taisha or Chief is a young man of good parts and son to the former chief; I called at his chancelry, but he was out, yet were passports afforded me in the Mongolian dialect by his secretary, ordering every assistance to be rendered me by all his tribe, and every respect to be shewn to me.

The present Taisha has two wives, who live in perfect harmony. He is fond of the missionaries, who frequently visit and lodge with him for weeks together, and is remarkably forward in the English language which Mr. Swan is teaching him. It is but very lately that he lost his father and mother who were rich, but he has been greatly impoverished by his mother's bequeathing her immense property to the lamas or priests. His possessions are about three thousand sheep, three hundred

horses, and two hundred horned cattle; whereas his mother had forty thousand sheep, ten thousand horses, and three thousand horned cattle, besides a very large property in furs. One of the sisters of the present, who was lately married to another chief, received as a dowry forty cases of furs of the richest kind. These are customarily worn till they actually drop off—such is the neglect and filthy manner in which they live. The women are, on their marriage, dressed in satins and silks bordered with furs; the occasion being honoured with the same respect as their great feast in the month of February, which appears to be a sort of religious feast in imitation of the Chinese. The chiefs and subjects live together almost indiscriminately. The chancelry of the Taisha contains fifteen clerks and a secretary, who carry on a most extensive correspondence, and it may be considered as exceedingly well regulated.

At sixty miles onward I breakfasted at a beautifully situated post-house; but with the exception of two or three agricultural villages, and those near the post-houses, there is neither cultivation nor inhabitant along the country. We now met with some lakes, and passed a monument erected to the memory of the late governor's wife, Mrs. Treskin of Irkutsk, who was travelling from that city to the warm baths near this place, when the horses taking fright, she was literally kicked to pieces; while, strange to say, her two attendants

and gallants remained unhurt. The circumstances altogether are of so horrid a nature, that it would have been impossibe not to lament the accident, if the character of the unfortunate woman had not fully justified the remark which I heard made, that her friends would have consulted their own and her interest much better, instead of raising the memorial, to suffer her name to be buried in total oblivion. At sixty miles farther we reached a Buriat village, where we were plentifully supplied with a small species of trout.

The road was still very bad, being a vast plane, and having but little snow upon it. The indentations of the hills were however well wooded, and the scenery was upon the whole picturesque. The country thence continued low and sandy, till I reached the village of Tchitta, the river near which is a considerable stream running into the Ingoda, which unites with the Amoor, and is ultimately lost in the Eastern Ocean. There is a beautiful little village called Tchindat upon an island in the river, beyond which the scenery much improves. The drive down the river was very delightful from the ever changing views which were offered to us—the bold, magnificent and barren rocks looking at once grand and terrific; nor was this sublime scenery less acceptable when contrasted with the beautiful and fertile pastures every where around; with here and there a straggling corn field, and a hamlet smiling through the dark

woods which lay at the foot of the mountain precipices; or winding round and diminishing as the valleys continued to recede from our view. At six in the evening we reached the village of Baidalofsky, upon the left bank of the Ingoda, which here assumes a treacherous appearance, affording but a very unsafe journey over it. The stream is so rapid that it is seldom frozen for any length of time. We were twice upset into the river and lost one of the horses. Indeed such was the state of the weather, that no greater degree of frost than 15° had been observed since I left Verchney Udinsk.

We now began to hear favourable accounts of the exertions of the new chief of Nertchinsk, who had materially ameliorated the condition of the convicts and peasants. Again my companions began to lament their hard duty, and requested me to halt and pass the night comfortably in a post-house. I however persuaded them to continue seventy miles farther along a river which continually gave under us, and in no slight degree alarmed one of my friends, who was certainly born for other scenes than travelling in Siberia, unless in the easiest and most commodious manner. We were obliged at last to walk along the banks of the river, from the impossibility of getting the horses along. The thermometer, as we approached Nertchinsk, fell to 28° of Reaumur, and although I had but my simple koklanka, or leather frock, I felt nothing but anxiety to push on, aware that if I could not re-

turn within a certain time, I should not be able to quit Irkutsk before the month of May.

The scenery was now very fine: elevated perpendicular bluffs, with pretty cultivated valleys, and several pleasant villages. The river Ingoda also assumed a more considerable appearance, widening as we reached to the eastward, and at the city of Nertchinsk, being really a formidable channel. We reached the city late in the evening; its distance from Verchney Udinsk is about five hundred miles. Having waited upon the three chiefs, and delivered our credentials, Mr. Stannack and I sallied out to view the place. It is vilely built, widely scattered, badly situated, and worse inhabited. It contains two hundred dwellings, and one thousand inhabitants. Three tolerable brick edifices are the only objects worthy of notice in it, and, except that it has a church, it is merely a larger picture of any Russian village.

The site of the city has within a few years been removed hither, a circumstance which may in some measure excuse its miserable appearance; but nothing can atone for its present bleak and exposed situation, without even fire-wood in its vicinity. The site of the old town was far superior, affording shelter and many conveniences which are not now to be obtained. The town of Nertchinsk stands at the junction of the Shilka and Nertcha rivers, uniting with the Amoor, of which, however, there is no part within the limits

of the Russian empire. I was hospitably received by the different officers, especially the town-major, who distinguished himself in the late French invasion.

We quitted Nertchinsk for the Bolshoy Zavod, or Great Fabrick, distant one hundred and eighty miles, and over a highly picturesque park scenery, reminding me much of the upper banks of the Irtish, where the hills appeared as if placed upon a fertile plain, without any sort of communication with each other. The rocks are extremely bare, and with the exception of wood in the valleys, there is little or nothing of cultivation to be seen. The thermometer now fell to 35°, and the air assumed a chillness I had not for some time been accustomed to. The soil, is however, so rich, that corn villages are every where to be seen all the way to Bolshoy Zavod, which shews an active encouragement on the part of the chief, of those more immediately under his eye and command. The fact is, that in consequence of the numerous desertions upon the high road to Verchney Udinsk, it is not the wish of the government to render the country either populous or cultivated. On the contrary, every thing possible is done to make the country so impassable, that deserters may be obliged to resort to the post-houses for subsistence, where they are secured and sent to the prison of Verchney Udinsk. Should they take the route of the Tongousi, or Bratsky district, they are certain of being

shot by the hunters or chiefs, unless they produce a passport from the chief of Nertchinsk. The inhabitants occupying the corn villages, are all exiles of the upper sort, and yet as ill looking a class of people as I ever beheld. I was glad to pass them in safety, although at the price of being upset in a dangerous manner. We were, however, rather frightened than hurt, and reached safely the Zavod or Chief Fabric, late in the evening.

A sound sleep which we had not enjoyed for many days or nights, qualified us to pay our respects early the next morning to the chief, whom, with his son-in-law, I remembered as serving at Barnaoule during the time I visited that place. A large feast had been held to honor the marriage of a doctor to a pretty plump woman with a little money; and I consequently found the people in silks and satins, and otherwise so daubed, that I began to augur ill of the place. It is the most miserable, yet extensive assemblage of huts I have any where witnessed. Even the residence of the chief is but to be compared to two or three yourtes joined to one another.

I saw nothing at Nertchinsk which could inspire me with any other sentiments than those of contempt and indignation at the inconsiderate conduct of the persons in authority over the poor criminals. It is impossible to conceive the haggard, worndown, wretched, and half-starved appearance of these victims. Whatever may have

been their crimes—and I believe them horrible enough—they never can have authorized the present inconsiderate mode of employing them. The knout, the whip, the brand, and the fetter, are nothing, when compared with the imposition of labour continued from sun-rise to sun-set for six months in the year, and during the other six to keep them in absolute idleness. The cutting of wood, getting in of hay, and attendance upon officers, is almost denied to the poor convict, from the fear of his deserting. Alas! whither can he go?—To places equally wild and savage? to those where the brute creation would equally torment him with those of his own species? The man who is sentenced to drag out the remainder of his existence in the mines of Nertchinsk cannot live long. What have become of the many thousands of beings sentenced annually to this place? Where are their wives and families? for here the work is carried on only by the constant arrival of fresh victims. Of Ekatherinebourg, I had certainly formed a low idea, but Nertchinsk is in reality the only place that I have seen where man is treated harshly throughout the Russian empire—I except the aborigines of Siberia. I should have expected and have hoped, that the present chief of this place would take a lesson from the well organized establishment of Barnaoule, of the humanity and consideration every where apparent in the acts of that government. Why may not the exiles and peasants of

this place, like the people of Barnaoule, be allowed every alternate day to themselves? It would be better both for the government and the exiles, if they were banished from this world at once, and the expense of their transportation would then be saved.

The principal fabric, or Bolshoy Zavod, contains about four hundred yourtes, and three thousand individuals. No one dwelling, whether of public or private property, has even a decent appearance; they are all in fact huts: and such is the sterility of the soil, and such the severity of the climate, that no spar is to be had of a greater length than eight or ten feet, and even that comes from a great distance. The situation of this fabric corresponds with its condition; it is in a deep hollow, surrounded by high and barren rocks, as bleak and dreary, and as inhospitable a place as can be imagined. The allowance to the criminals is on a par with every thing else—it is thirty-six roubles, equal to twenty-seven shillings a year, to procure them food, raiment, firing, and lodging; The winters are considered as severe as in any other part of Siberia; for this its eastern situation will sufficiently account. The demand for warm clothing and firing is by consequence comparatively great, and the climate is in short such, that the fabrics cannot be worked during the winter.

Nertchinsk, in all its concerns, reminds me forcibly of those pathetic descriptions of the mines of

Siberia drawn by romantic writers; here their ideas are verified;—yet it cannot be supposed that the government of the country is so lost to feeling, to humanity, and good policy, as to wink at conduct of the kind. They must certainly be ignorant of what is doing, and of what the criminals suffer; yet how then can we account for a continuance of such severe treatment after the visit of the celebrated Mr. Speranski? This is indeed a serious question and charge. Since my arrival at St. Petersburg, however, I have been informed that it is the intention of government to give up the establishment at Nertchinsk altogether, and withdraw the people, a determination which I hope originated with Mr. Speranski. It is indeed better policy than the old system of oppression, and yet bad enough, for the district is highly productive and valuable.

There are six silver founderies, namely, Nertchinsk, Doutcharsk, Koutomarsk, Ekaterininsk, Gazimoursk, Shilkinsk. There is also a new foundery, named Petrofsk, for the casting of iron for the use of the silver founderies. The thirteen principal mines when worked, produced formerly about a million of poods of ore, or three hundred poods of silver per annum, which is nearly one pound weight of silver for every four thousand pounds weight of ore. The present proportion is one-third less, or from one hundred and eighty to two hundred poods of silver per annum, besides twenty-five thou-

sand poods of lead, which is of no service whatever. When the transport of this silver to St. Petersburg by especial conductors and guards is calculated, together with the maintenance of the establishments at Nertchinsk, and a large military and Cossack force, who must be fed from Irkutsk, I need scarcely say that the whole is a ruinous as well as cruel concern. What is half a million of roubles? What is twenty-five thousand pounds to the Emperor, the produce of forty-eight thousand and twenty-seven individuals, at ten shillings and fivepence per head per annum, being the value extracted from the mines of Nertchinsk? The following is the population:—

Staff Officers	78
Unclassed Officers	699
Convicts in the Mines	2,458
Persons released from labour	1,216
Boys who do or do not receive maintenance from Government	1,611
Total male convicts	6,062
Female branches of the above	6,098
Peasants attached to the Founderies	17,773
Females, do	18,094
Grand Total	48,027

Of these there are actually but sixteen hundred and two able bodied men in the mines, and these are guarded by five hundred and sixty-four inferior officers, to prevent their secreting gold, silver, or precious stones.

Although the chief and various officers had the politeness to invite me to some entertainments, which were to be given in the course of the week, I declined them from a feeling of the apparent and real misery so visible every where, that a heart alive to any sense of humanity, or kind feeling, could not fail to contrast the state of the two classes in this city of huts. At most such conduct would only stifle better and more praiseworthy thoughts. Even in the dissipation of a ball-room, I could not discard from my mind the abject distress and misery every where prevailing, and I felt it necessary to follow the example of Mr. Speranski, who also remained here but one day. I am certain that the goodness of his Excellency's heart must have prevented his remaining to witness such a scene. I departed for Tsurukhaitouyefsk late in the evening, and arrived early the following morning, the road being very good, and the country latterly interesting; the distance is sixty miles. Tsurukhaitouyefsk is a large village, called a fortress, on the banks of the Argoon, unlike the city and Chief Fabric of Nertchinsk. It did my heart good to see to what a state of comparative perfection the numerous vegetable gardens are brought in this industrious place; the order, cleanliness, and hospitality of which are too apparent to be passed over in silence. The chief inhabitants are Cossacks, who have certain privileges and protections, which cannot be infringed; they are, both officers and privates, generally a rich,

and generous, and noble people; in short, the inhabitants, along this line of frontier, are all that is understood in the word Cossack. The vicinity abounds in the richest metals and minerals, but is, as I have shewn, of no great value during the present system of policy. I saw a tolerably good collection of minerals in the possession of an old Russian, who takes great delight in shewing, and being a poor man is naturally desirous to dispose of them, but does not appear to know their value. He demands about two hundred and fifty pounds for the collection, a prodigious sum in that place, but a single specimen might be worth the money if brought to this country. Its weight is one hundred and seventy English pounds, and it is composed of so many minerals that he calls it the "Mother of Minerals." Among other specimens were, an amethyst, a noble topaze, an aqua-marine, onyx, and several beautiful crystals, besides many thousands of small specimens. The whole of these precious stones are imbedded in frozen sand, and I should think it would require great care and difficulty to remove it entire. Of the Scotch pebbles, the large size, and the beauty of the veins were really astonishing; I made him an offer for one of the specimens, but the old gentleman would sell no less than the whole. Being introduced to him by the chief of the Cossacks, and upon hearing my name, he remarked that he had read it in the Gazettes, adding, that as this world appeared too

small for my movements, he expected ere long to hear of my arrival in the moon.

We quitted the fortress and resumed our journey along the lines; by midnight we had made but thirty miles along a snowless desert pasture. The night was exceedingly cold, and I suffered from want of exercise, being in an open sledge: the thermometer stood at 36°. My companions here became alarmed at the difficulties which presented themselves against our progress, as well from the want of snow as from that of horses. They consequently determined to return by the route they had come; but for myself, I had long made it a settled plan never to go over the same road while another is practicable, and therefore determined to proceed alone. I felt regret at parting company, which must, however, have taken place soon, as from their continual stoppages for rest and refreshment, I must have determined to out sail them. The quantity of their baggage, with three servants to attend them, rendered it also impossible for them to keep pace with me who was alone, with a knapsack only; and indeed the inconveniences and difficulties which afterwards happened to me, proved the prudence of their decision.

I reached Kondou, forty miles, by a fine road, having previously come through a small fabric, the director of which presented me with a few mineralogical specimens. Kondou is an ancient place, and considered to be the same with Tchindat-turu-

kouy, the birth-place of the conqueror of China. I saw many remains of large tartar ovens, but nothing that excited my curiosity so much as an old lady of ninety-three years of age. She was born in the vicinity of Nertchinsk, and was now not only in the full possession of all her faculties, but in strong health, and capable of attending to the cares of her house and family. I had a most excellent dinner prepared for me by her own hands, and left her highly gratified, to pursue my journey over the immense pasture, passing through droves of three or four thousand horses. The country became more sterile, but somewhat more elevated as I reached a hospitable dwelling on the river Borgee, and then the Fortress of Chindat, situated near the little river Onons, which contains sixty dwellings, a party of Cossacks, and nothing besides. At four miles from it I passed through a large village of Russian agriculturists, who live here free from all the cares of the world but that of the tax-gatherers, against whose extortion I heard bitter complaints. The raising of corn appears to be pursued with some difficulty, but success attends the breeding of cattle. The inhabitants I have found civil, hospitable, and obliging when properly applied to, but otherwise both ignorant and obstinate.

At the next place I was attended by a Cossack, and a guard of honour was mounted and a sentinel placed at my door to await my orders. The reports were also made to me, and with this state I con-

tinued my route until I reached the half-way village between the fortresses of Chindat and Kharinsky, almost shaken to pieces from bad roads, and a worse vehicle, a common and open télèga, the total absence of snow rendering it necessary to proceed with wheels. To the south, the hills begin to make their appearance, and of course offer inducement to look about after the late dearth of scenery. I here met with the first Tongousian Cossacks. They subsist on a salary of six roubles, or four shillings and sixpence a year, without bread or clothing, but a sword is held up by these half-naked wretches. They are in general a miserable set, but more particularly so at this moment, when their occupation prevents their going in search of fish, game, or furs. Yet I found them contented, and even happy, if possessed of a couple of cows or horses. The Cossacks treat them well, and feed many of them, whom they employ as servants; nothing will induce them, however, to pass a night in a house so long as they have their own miserable yourte to go to. Indeed I recollect one of the chiefs contrasting the wholesome, free and fresh air which pervaded his yourte, to the stifled heat of a house: I think he was right in his choice. In all the villages I had lately passed, along these lines, there was nothing but lamentations; a veteran battalion, which had been stationed there for twenty years, was ordered to the government of Tomsk, distant about two thousand five hundred miles;

the women and children could not accompany them. Their only riches consisted in a comfortable dwelling, a vegetable garden, and possibly a cow: all these were to be sold for a trifle to the Cossacks who remain. The case is indeed a very hard one.

From the village of Khirring the scenery improves, the soil assumes a dark mouldy appearance, and a good many corn fields are scattered about. The river Onons runs along the valley which now formed my route; in descending one of the hills the horses took fright and got the better of the driver, who foolishly enough turned them down instead of up the hill, and thus not only upset, but broke the vehicle to pieces; as usual I escaped unhurt, though almost miraculously. We crossed the horses with the baggage lashed upon them, and reached a village all safe, distant ten miles from the scene of the accident. There I found an economical granary, upon a plan which might be well copied by the inhabitants of more civilised countries. Every head of a family agrees to reserve a certain proportion of his grain for the consumption of the following year, in the event of a scarcity. It has only this difference from the saving banks in England, that in the one case, it is to prevent future famine, and in the other, future poverty. Upon my journey to Mogoitou, I was again upset and nearly dashed to pieces; the horses going down a steep hill, set off at full speed, and hauled the driver, myself, and baggage down the descent at a

wonderful rate; again, however, Providence protected me, and the accident had no disastrous consequence. The horses, it seems, are aware that winter is not yet over, and do not like to be so early put to wheeled vehicles. There has seldom been known a winter in which there was so great a want of snow, not even the hills retaining a vestige of it. The misfortunes of this day operated upon me so powerfully, it being my wife's birthday, 24th January, O. S. that I determined no longer to defy the Fates, and accordingly tarried for the night. I had come over a hilly and well wooded country of considerable cultivation, as also towards Ashenghinsky, the fortress most south-east of any on this line of the frontiers between China and Russia. The distance to Ashenghinsky is thirty miles; it is, like Chindat and Tsurukhaitouyefsk, a fortress containing sixty Cossacks and an officer, who is brother to the commandants of those other fortresses. The village of Ashenghinsky is pleasantly situated, and no person is permitted to live beyond it. Betwixt that place and Kiakhta there are two or three other fortresses, but no communication between them except by the foot of the mountains which divide the two empires of China and Russia. The whole distance to Kiakhta is five hundred miles, which cannot be accomplished on horseback with the same horses in less than ten days. I had not so much spare time, and therefore reluctantly retraced my steps to Mogoitou with the design of get-

ting upon the great route, one hundred miles from Tchitta, and thence to Kiakhta, which I calculated could be done in four or five days. The evening was passed in celebrating my wife's birth-day, with a good supper and a glass of punch: my host, however, had taken it for granted that I was a bachelor.

Next morning I departed and overtook about a hundred of the veteran battalion, who had been stationed upon the southern parts of the lines. I could not help smiling at the officer in command as he put his head, enveloped in a night cap, out of a cart to salute me; he was besides wrapped up in furs of various sorts and colours. I recollected that when I served in Canada with seamen, I considered it as shameful to ride while the sailors walked, for I did not consider myself as a judge of their fatigues or sufferings, without thus partaking of them. I shall, however, offer an excuse for this officer, who had certainly passed his grand climacteric. The road was sandy and stony, and but little pasture to be seen, yet the valleys presented scenes of interest. The little river Onons runs along the main valley, which is miserably inhabited by Raskolniks or Polish schismatics. At one hundred miles I reached the Ingoda river, over a poor and sterile district which does not even afford post-houses; and being without any attendant or Cossack, I found great difficulty in getting on. The people were not only uncivil, but inhospitable, so much so, that we frequently passed

stations or villages without receiving any food, a circumstance I the more felt, as with the real Russians or aborigines I had always lived in clover. The carts hereabouts cannot go ten miles without some accident, and it requires no little ingenuity to repair them upon the road, so as to enable the traveller to reach the next station. Upon regaining the river Ingoda, I had again recourse to the sledge, the safest and most comfortable way of travelling. I thus reached Tchitta early in the morning, where I found all bustle and confusion, awaiting the arrival of one of the most amiable men I know, namely, the governor of Irkutsk, Mr. Tzedler. I almost regretted meeting his Excellency, as it seemed only to part with him, and yet I could never have quitted Siberia without saying adieu to that man and that family, whom in all Asia I most loved. May health and happiness ever attend both him and his! My route towards Verchney Udinsk was not marked by any thing peculiar, I moved along at a quick rate, till in crossing the dreary and stony steppe, the vehicle was knocked to pieces, there being no snow upon the ground, and I was consequently compelled to walk the rest of the way.

I reached Verchney Udinsk late in the evening, and waited upon the town-major, after which I determined to visit the hot-baths that I might bid adieu to the female part of the governor's family. Having procured a Cossack and sledge, I departed

at midnight, and the next evening reached the baths, distant one hundred and thirty miles; but on what sort of road, or over what sort of country, I am perfectly ignorant, fatigue having quite incapacitated me from noticing. I was most kindly received by the ladies, and induced to stay a day with them, during which I inspected the baths, hospitals, &c. which I found upon a tolerably good plan, with many conveniences. The water of the baths may be tempered from 160° downwards; they are strongly recommended for the cure of all chronic and rheumatic diseases, and are proverbial for the cure of that disease which may be called the plague of the Peninsula. There is little difference between those of Malka in Kamtchatka and these; both are sulphureous. There are many springs, the largest of which is two feet square and one deep; a thick dense fog continually hovers over the place, which I think contributes to the facility with which the fine vegetables appear to be raised. An overseer is appointed to look after the buildings, receive the rents, and keep a journal; he has a few workmen under his directions, and with the excellent accommodations of his own, a sort of boarding-house, he has altogether a comfortable place. The site is highly picturesque, being but three miles from the lake Baikal, which is seen in all its magnificence from a little eminence at the back of the hospital; the country round is thickly wooded, and provisions are not dear. It is directed

by the colonial government at little or no expense to them, yet it is a pleasant resort during the months of March and April, when all the rooms and cottages, public and private, are crowded with merchants and their families.

I imprudently continued in a bath for a quarter of an hour, and made myself very weak, yet persisted in immediately retracing my steps to Verchney Udinsk, having bid adieu to my kind and amiable friend. My route lay through a thick forest, to the borders of the Baikal, after which I coasted along the outer edge of the ice for eighteen miles, a distance easily performed in one hour and a half, thence, through a thick forest of lofty pine trees. The beauty of the route is surprising, and is the work of the late governor Treskin. I passed at a prodigious rate along the picturesque but well fenced banks of a mountain; the horses were excellent, the drivers a set of fellows equally accustomed to whip and be whipped, i. e. a desperate crew of convicts, sent here for this express service. After midnight, my route lay over numerous lakes, some of them of so poisonous a nature, that many of the convicts lost their lives while forming the road a few years ago. Ducks, geese, and other birds cannot live after drinking of the water, though it appears that swans offer an effectual resistance to the poison. I saw many of them swimming upon the principal lake; for, whether from fear or superstition, they are never disturbed by the inhabitants.

This journey was rendered very unpleasant from the superior respect which my Cossack paid to his own comforts, monopolizing nearly the whole of the cart, and snoring in such a manner as effectually to prevent myself as well as the driver and horses from getting any rest whatever. The inhabitants upon this by-road are regular Russian schismatic convicts, and a more Tyburn-like set I never beheld. Woe to him, either in person or pocket, who travels as I did, without prepared provisions: generally they are too obstinate to sell any thing, and when they do, will charge five hundred per cent. upon articles of necessity.

Upon the river Etamza I made fifteen miles, when I entered upon the Selenga at its conflux with the latter river. The morning was very cold and windy, and almost too severe to allow our progress at any rate, but my anxiety to get on, backed by a dram of spirits to the drivers, induced them to continue, and I for the fourth time reached Verchney Udinsk, the latter part of the scenery being lofty and well wooded. My reports having been delivered to the several chiefs, I dined with them and then departed for Kiakhta one hundred and fifty miles distant, the first twenty-five of which were over the mountains, passing through a large village of one hundred peasants' dwellings. The road thence proving very indifferent, I descended the steep banks of the Selenga, pursuing my route along the river, and reached in good time the

missionary station. The inhabitants had been expecting me for many days, not imagining that I would cross the country, or proceed beyond the Bolshoy Zavod.

I breakfasted with these devout gentlemen, and proceeded for Kiakhta, the first station to which was twenty miles along the Selenga. The route is at present dangerous, the river having given way under the numerous loaded wagons which crossed a tender part of the ice at a time when the thermometer had shewn for two days 2° of heat. Along the Selenga, passing through forty miles of dreary scenery, with only a few miserable villages to be seen, I reached the point where the road turns off from the river, and that which leads to the Chinese frontiers is continued over a more open, wooded, and, of course, interesting country. On reaching Kiakhta, the hills rise in a commanding manner, spreading out in various directions, and forming beautiful but unproductive valleys. Every thing, in short, denotes a frontier situation, and something seemed to say, that here were the limits of two mighty empires.

CHAPTER XV.

Kiakhta—Cloouchie—Seleginsk—Irkutsk—The Angara—Nishney Udinsk—Illan—Krasnojarsk—Yeneseisk—The Black River—Atchinsk—Bogotova—Kemchiega—Perecoole—Tomsk—Tasheeka—Chien—Kainsk—Barabinsky Steppe—Vosnesensk—Yalanka—Zavolgalka—Omsk.

The barracks and store houses upon the banks of the little brook Kiakhta, before the entry of the fortress, so called, have a pleasing appearance. This is a neat and regularly built town, with four hundred and fifty houses and four thousand inhabitants, a larger proportion to each dwelling than is probably found in any other part of the Russian empire. The little brook, of its own name, serves as the boundary of China and Russia, upon the right bank of which the fortress stands. Kiakhta is considered healthy, although the water is not good: but for the more wealthy inhabitants, this essential article of subsistence is brought at a considerable expense from a distance of two miles, and fire-wood from a distance of twenty. The soil is so poor that even common vegetables are with difficulty raised.

The district of Kiakhta is governed by what is called a Director, who has also the administration of the custom-house department, and unites in his own person, the judicial, political, military, and commercial superintendance. The two former of-

fices are subject to a revision from Irkutsk, but the latter are dependent only upon the approbation of the Cabinet. The situation of the Director is one of great importance and trust, as well as of considerable personal emolument. The present officer has held the situation twelve or thirteen years, during which time he has doubtless had the means of amassing a most princely fortune, if his inclination lay that way; he is, however, not yet disposed to quit his command, and appeared to me to be a most honorable, intelligent, and indefatigable servant of the Emperor.

Kiakhta, I have already said, is a regular, well built town, but beyond this it can never reach, so long as the jealousy and envious policy of the Chinese is maintained. No stone buildings are allowed to be erected, except only a church for public worship; and though situate in a dreary, sterile basin, possesses many comforts. Beyond the fortress and immediately opposite to Maimatchin is the town of commerce now called Old Kiakhta, the residence only of the merchants, no officer or stranger being permitted to sleep in it, according to an article of the treaty of both empires. I visited Old Kiakhta in company with one of the most respectable merchants, agreeably to the request of the director, and found it to contain forty-five dwellings, many of which are very superior edifices, and have within them very rich stores. Under the countenance of the same respectable merchant, I con-

tinued my route toward the Chinese fortress, for so it is called, distant about two hundred fathoms from the old town of Kiakhta. Of all the celebrated places I have seen, and which have nothing to support their celebrity, Maimatchin is the most eminent. It is a small, ill built, mud town, with four narrow, mud paved streets, running at right angles, containing, during the fair, from twelve to fifteen hundred men and boys, for the female sex are prohibited. The houses are without windows, and there is a total absence of every thing that can interest even the most ignorant or careless. Such then is Maimatchin, which reminded me much of the old Moorish towns in the south of Spain and Portugal, and of those situate along the northern coast of Africa. The absence of windows towards the street may be pardonable, as at least not mischievous, but to the absence of the fair sex is mainly attributable that dreadful degeneracy which is said to pervade all ranks of society among them. The streets, as well as the dwellings, are clean; the latter are approached by a narrow court, on each side of which are the store-houses. In the centre of this oblong square, is the actual residence where the Chinese live, eat, drink, smoke, sleep, and carry on their business, and it is divided into two apartments. The first is appropriated to the sale of goods, which are fantastically displayed; and fires, candles, brass stoves, and ovens, meet the eye at every corner, in the centre, or wherever the person may be

who wishes to light his pipe. The other apartment is appropriated to the guests for eating, drinking, &c. and differs from the first, in having a raised platform, which serves for a bed or dining place; upon this during the day, the blankets, pillows and cushions are neatly rolled up and ornamentally arranged. The fixtures of both apartments, which are richly prepared, are of mahogany brightly polished.

I paid my respects to half a dozen of the principal Chinese merchants, some of whom are well versed in the Russian language. I was every where received with affability and hospitality; tea, liqueurs, dried fruits, cakes, punch and segars were immediately placed before me, and much interest seemed to be excited at finding an Englishman in that distant part of their empire. I was asked if I had been at Canton, and on replying in the negative, was recommended to go there. The English, I was told, carried on a vast trade at that port, and that as I had come so far to see such a vile place as Maimatchin, I could easily go and see Canton. I found these Chinese extremely courteous and communicative, but they were much distressed when I told them that I employed a Chinese servant at Irkutsk. They could not understand how one of their celestial decendants could think of living in the Russian empire. The fact was that Captain Rikord had a Chinese servant who went from Canton to Kamtchatka expressly to serve him; he had been in London some time and was a good servant,

speaking various languages, and would very gladly have followed me to England.

They have lanterns placed at regular distances, and lighted at a proper time, and cotton and silken bags, false bells, and other absurdities hang about the exterior of their dwellings. I visited their temple, which, notwithstanding its idolatrous purpose, has much of the Romish character about it. I saw no images of female saints, but numbers of gigantic men and horses, and the whole was evidently the same sort of glittering carved and gilded work, as the most tawdry Romish church or chapel can boast. The Chinese temples, however, have this difference, that real valuables are not to be seen; neither gold, silver, nor jewels, nor even the semblance of them being placed about their images. I do not know whether this is the case in other parts of China.

There is no fortress nor defence to Maimatchin, though from three to five hundred souls remain in the village during the spring, summer, and autumn. Trade continues during the whole of the year, and there is no ceremony observed on either side on entering the Russian or Chinese villages. The best understanding exists, and each party alternately entertains the other. At this moment, the Chinese are employed in cards, draughts, chess, drinking, dancing, and singing. In the month of February is their chief festival, being what is termed the White Month, or the beginning of their new year.

The principal feasts last three days, that is from the day before to the day after the full moon, and then the fair commences. The Russian chief also gives a feast to the chief Mandarin, and the principal Chinese.

In reply to a question I put to one of the merchants, I was told that the distance from Kiakhta to Pekin is one thousand five hundred miles; that a courier can go in ten days, but that it takes thirty days for the merchants with their goods. I was informed also that it is about one thousand miles from Kiakhta to the frontiers of China Proper, and that the road is across the Mongolian, a well peopled territory. The Mongoles are only so far dependent upon the Chinese, as to permit them to pass and repass their country unmolested, being paid for the hire of the horses, &c.

For an account of the trade of Kiakhta and the manner of carrying it on, and which is a mere matter of exchange or barter, as not the smallest credit even for a moment is given by the Chinese, although it is by the Russians, I may refer my readers to Mr. Cox's work. The mode of trafficking is there accurately described, the work and risk still falling upon the Russians, the latter sending their goods in the first instance, and then receiving their teas, &c. The chief articles of import into Russia are teas, cottons, nankeens, silks, and good satins, many articles of curiosity and ingenuity, and some trinkets. The exports from Russia are in general

furs, i. e. foxes, sables, river and sea otters, wild cats, beavers, and millions of squirrels. The lightness, warmth, durability and cheapness of the latter have made them a favourite with the Chinese; and it is remarkable that the most rare and valuable furs do not fetch a good price with the Chinese, as they prefer the worst and most common. The best and most valuable are sold at Moscow and Nishney Novgorod for the use of the Russians, Turks, and Persians. A large quantity of woollen cloths is also exported, and such, upon the whole, is the trade between Russia and China, that it yields a revenue of about seven millions of roubles, or three hundred and fifty thousand pounds per annum, a sum which in Russia is equivalent to three millions in England. The exports and imports are averaged at thirty millions of roubles, or a million and a half. Last year three millions of pounds of tea were imported into Russia; this year the tea, as indeed other trade, is far from brisk. There is an immense stock of furs in hand, and this surplus is caused by the war between the Greeks and Turks. Forty sables, which are commonly averaged at eight hundred roubles, will now scarcely fetch three hundred and fifty. The Chinese know this, and are actually feeding upon the war alluded to.

I returned from the Chinese town late in the evening, and enjoyed two days in the society, hospitality, and friendship of the Accouratnoy, (that is, the peculiarly correct) chief. The propriety and

decorum visible in the establishment of the chief, the accomplishments of his very amiable lady, and the superior education of his infant family, are of more value, and far more interesting, than any thing else I had seen in Kiakhta. Among other instances of attentive kindness on the part of the chief, I may mention my having been presented with a curious map of the Chinese Empire, with Russian notes, and which will be found by the curious in the British Museum to whom I presented it. Provisions are dear, bread fifteen pence for forty pounds, meat one penny a pound, and other things in proportion. The merchants live well, and evince an air of liberality and good faith which I have not seen with people of their class in other parts of Siberia or Russia; some of them are immensely rich, having settled here from Moscow, Kazan, Tobolsk, Irkutsk, Wologda, Kalouga, and Nishney Novgorod. One of them, Mr. Siberikoff, belonging to Irkutsk, and who has been three times elected mayor, has lately opened a new and splendid residence to his friends, the bare walls of which cost two hundred thousand roubles. The whole expenses, including its magnificent furniture from Europe, will, it is said, cost him, at least, twenty thousand pounds, a prodigious sum for a mansion in Siberia.

Having seen all that I thought interesting in and about Kiakhta, I quitted it upon the third day. My route lay along the right bank of the Selenga,

a rich pasture level, interspersed with Buriat villages, whose inhabitants received me with every distinction and obsequiousness, in consequence of my Mongole passport. At forty miles I crossed the little river Jackoy, and, coasting it for twenty miles, reached a large Russian village, Kliutchi, containing one hundred houses and near five hundred inhabitants. The soil had in general been sandy, and there was a good deal of pine wood on it. Being in an open cart, I suffered much from a strong cold wind, but persisted in continuing my route that I might not be too late for the winter road from Irkutsk. In the middle of the night I was overturned, but to these occurrences I had of late become so accustomed, that I scarcely noticed it. The latter part of the journey was over a hilly and sterile country, yet pasturing many flocks of sheep and goats, appertaining to some Buriats, who are rich in this neighbourhood. Early in the morning, after a cold and unpleasant night, with the thermometer at 30° of frost, I reached once more, and for the last time, the abode of the Missionaries. A dram, a hearty breakfast, and a more hearty welcome, soon made amends for all.

Being Sunday, I was the sole auditor of a long and extemporary sermon, from Isa. xli. 10. "Fear thou not for I am with thee." It was the first I had listened to for three years, and was therefore doubly acceptable. The text was remarkably appropriate, and the discourse directly adverted to the protec-

tions I had received from above during my past and yet unfinished pilgrimage. After divine service I partook of a farewel dinner, and bade adieu to these worthy and zealous Missionaries, regretting only that a more active and more useful station has not been assigned to their present unpretending and important occupation.

I visited a small dock-yard in which vessels are built on an island at the junction of the Jackoy and Selenga, and which are employed to transport the merchandize from Kiakhta to Irkutsk, and down the Angara to the Tongouska, &c. From what I saw I should term them clumsy and heavy galliots.

I heard with surprise and regret, upon my arrival at the town of Selenginsk, that my travelling companions, the post inspectors, had passed through on their way to Kiakhta without staying for an adieu. They knew it was Sunday and probably feared the effects of a sermon. I took the summer road to Verchney Udinsk, which is distant from the right bank of the river some miles; it is a hilly and sandy country, well wooded with pine. On reaching Verchney early in the morning, I found all bustle and anxiety to see their new governor-general. The officers appeared to me to be suspended between hope and fear, and I could not help smiling to see their guilty consciences fully depicted in their faces. Being well assured that his Excellency's arrival would take place the following day,

I determined to await it, to express my acknowledgments for his kindness and consideration.

In the mean time, I found good quarters and excellent society at the abode of the Okroujênoy chief and his young bride. The governor-general arrived as I had predicted, with all his numerous staff. His Excellency's plain dealing and honest speaking soon put the whole city in perturbation. Very few compliments passed, and I believe his Excellency will be, though more disliked, as long remembered and respected for his integrity, as the late governor-general Mr. Speranski; for the present chief, like his predecessor, has struck at the roots, as well as lopped the branches, of corruption. His Excellency appears determined to put down those abuses: I fear, however, the task will prove difficult, unless the situations of the officers are made more respectable than they are at present.

I departed for Irkutsk, which I reached safely, and re-crossed the Baikal, where I purchased a couple of silvery seal's skins, or phoca Siberica, which are numerous in the lake, and consequently set aside the axiom of Pliny. I reached Irkutsk early on the morning of the 7th of February, having been one month absent. I immediately occupied myself in preparing for my departure towards Europe, which I hoped to reach by a sledge-road. Society had lost every charm in Irkutsk; the ladies, the military, and most respectable merchants were either gone to the fair of Kiakhta, or to the hot baths. I took possession of my old quarters,

and became, as it were, master of the house. I had here the pleasure of receiving a long and highly complimentary letter from Sir Charles Bagot, a pleasure, indeed, far too great to be described.

Upon the evening of the 10th of February snow fell in great quantities, and I consequently departed the next morning, with tears of regret at quitting a place where I had been so cordially and respectfully entertained. If on my return, I experience similar good fortune, I shall indeed have cause to rejoice; and if my expenses from hence to Moscow be as small as to this place, I may be termed a most economical traveller; for from thence to Irkutsk, about three thousand five hundred miles, cost me only thirty-two roubles, or about twenty-five shillings.

Late in the evening I reached the glass and cloth manufactory belonging to the Emperor, distant forty miles from Irkutsk. The cloth, produced from this factory, is of a stout and coarse kind, and of a greyish colour, and is destined to the use of the Siberian army. The glass is, in general, of a greenish colour, but both manufactories are considered to be in a thriving condition. Its commandant depends upon the private cabinet of the Emperor, and is in no respect subservient to the Governor-General of Irkutsk. I had crossed the Angara, with its fertile plain, and had viewed the distant hills to the right, with a melancholy to which I had not of late been accustomed, after which my route lay over a well wooded country, with neat

and populous villages at every ten and twelve miles, besides numbers inhabited by Buriats off the high road, at the distance of two and three miles. The weather was cold, but the road being very fine, we were not long in reaching Nishney Udinsk, which we did on the morning of the 13th of February, in a frost of 32°.

Nishney Udinsk is a large but scattered town situated on the right bank of the Uda, which falls into the Yenissei. The people were mostly drunk, and I was consequently detained for some time. The town-major, who is the progeny of a a cockney shoemaker and a butcher's daughter, amused me greatly, by shewing me his affidavits and indentures, bearing the signature of Sir Richard Carr Glyn, the then Lord Mayor. He is strongly marked with the characteristics of his cockney ancestry. It was at this place that the most unbridled tyranny and extortion was practised about three years since, by the Ispravnick, who was seized and conveyed away under a strong guard, by orders of Mr. Speranski, and still remains in prison. He was so great a simpleton as to keep his riches in his own dwelling, and all were consequently confiscated. Indeed, such were the abuses in this commissariat, that the Governor-General was a fortnight employed in hearing grievances. In those times no one, not even an officer, or civilian, could pass through the city without a Cossack; for unless a toll were paid, robbery was

certain afterwards to take place, a regular band being employed for that purpose. Nor am I aware, nor have I any reason to believe, that there is much difference betwixt its then and its present state.

From Udinsk I descended a difficult pass, at a tremendous rate. Under any other circumstances, I should certainly have preferred slower travelling, but the wretched disposition of the people reconciled me to the danger. I reached the large village of Illan, and the still larger village of Ingashe, where regularity, cleanliness, and propriety, are more conspicuous than in any other place that I have ever seen. Many of these villages contain from one hundred and fifty to two hundred dwellings. No horse, cow, or dog, no cart, or dirt of any kind is allowed to remain in the street a moment. When a vehicle stops with passengers or travellers, it must remain at the back of the dwelling, and the street being thus clear, the travelling vehicles pass through the village with a wonderful rapidity, without any fear of consequences.

I had now reached the frontier town of the government of Irkutsk, the inhabitants of which amount to six hundred and fifty thousand, including two hundred thousand in the government of Yakutsk, Okotsk, and Kamtchatka. The number of convicts is estimated at from ten to twelve thousand—many of them are allowed to work for their own benefit, as is the case in most of these villages on the frontier line. The children of these con-

victs become what may be termed crown peasants, the sins of the fathers being thus truly visited upon the children, unto every succeeding generation.

The government of Irkutsk is most extensive, occupying a breadth from east to west, of two thousand miles, and a difference of latitude equal to one thousand two hundred, which averages not more than one person to every four square miles. This part of the world is, however, so rapidly improving, that although it is little more than two years and a half since I passed this road, I can scarcely recognise the same places. Commissariats have become governments, towns have taken the rank of cities, villages are called towns, and where there were no dwellings there are now many hamlets. This might hastily be attributed to the increase of crime, but this is not the cause: it is owing to the transplanting of people to the vicinity of the new government; as well as to the arrival of convicts in the same ratio as the aborigines may be said to decrease.

Upon entering the government of Yenisseisk, I directed my route to Kanskoi, situate on the left bank of the river Kan, the Styx of Siberia. My old friend the schoolmaster had changed his abode, a circumstance which I much regretted. My route thence lay over a fruitful corn and pasture country with a good deal of fine scenery, until I reached the vicinity of Krasnojarsk, when it became more dreary and sandy. I reached this new capital of a

new province at midnight in very cold weather, and was glad to get into comfortable quarters as well as to escape from the ruffian set of convicts who compose the inhabitants of many of the villages, all of which are in a most disgraceful, mean, and slovenly condition. No spark of emulation is discernable in the character of the people of this province. This, no doubt, arises from want of encouragement on the part of the chiefs and visiting officers; but indeed the state of the police, and the attention shewn at the post-houses in the government of Irkutsk, makes the negligence in other governments much more conspicuous.

I have heard of necessary evils, and have doubted such a paradox. I was, however, on this journey convinced of the fact at certain places and at certain times. I had a good and active Cossack with me, whom I was very well pleased with except on arriving at the villages in the Yenisseisk or Tomsk governments; as on such occasions, it was his constant practice to beat, and otherwise ill-treat those whose business it was to provide horses, pulling them by the hair, ears, and nose, and this without the least apparent necessity or provocation. On my demanding the reason of this brutal conduct, he told me that if custom and inclination did not lead him, necessity would compel him so to act. The practice had the effect of enforcing the demand afterwards made for horses, which he was then certain of having furnished forthwith. That but for this

severe exercise of authority, there would be no possibility of his getting over more than sixty or eighty miles a day, while the government, at such a season of the year, expected at least one hundred and eighty or two hundred. Doubting the truth of this extraordinary representation, I desired that at the next village he would order horses in a peremptory manner, but not ill-treat or abuse the people concerned; he did so, tendered the passport and desired all haste to be made; the elder of the village replied the horses would arrive immediately. I waited half an hour, and got none. "Where is the elder of the village?" "At the gin-shop" said the Cossack, "helping to drink out the money which is to be paid for the next station." The elder of the village then came to me, with an apology, and returned to the gin-shop; nor did I actually get horses for two hours, at the expiration of which time the Cossack again had recourse to his old and effectual mode of levy. The reader will believe I never again interfered further than to entreat he would be more lenient; the consequence was, I had horses always provided in ten minutes.

This custom of flogging the peasants in advance, is so generally carried into execution, that they become more hardened and unfeeling than they otherwise would be; and it is this custom which makes them so averse to carry the government requisitions into effect. It must proceed from the

weak and ignorant policy of the superiors, a policy which adds greatly to the natural tyranny of the Cossacks. It was the strict and rigorous discipline kept up by governor Treskin, that enabled the traveller, and still enables him, to travel through the government of Irkutsk speedily and safely, with the exception of the point at Nishney Udinsk. By proper rewards and punishments, these people might be recalled from the state of depravity and insensibility they are now forced into, and be made, like most of the inhabitants of Siberia, a rational people; whereas now drunkenness, negligence, and recklessness, are their characteristics.

At Krasnojarsk I visited a party of Jews, of whom there are seventy in the city, some of them very rich. I was surprised at their wearing, added to their long beard, a tartar dress, which consists of a long silk gown, sash, and black bonnet. Their features, customs, and conduct, are otherwise the same with the rest of their nation. The price of provisions is much greater at Krasnojarsk, than it was formerly, owing to the formation of the new government. I called on my old friends the commissary and police master; the wonderful alterations which an increase of rank had made in the latter of these officers, served to shew me, that human nature is every where the same. I found the city in its old place, but much improved in new buildings, public and private; those for the Chancelry are beautiful in their design, and liberal in their

execution. The city is in general built of wood, but bricks are coming into more general use. The situation both in winter and summer, is windy and exposed. On the opposite bank of the rivers Achin and Yenissei, the country is beautiful and fertile during the spring, summer, and autumn, but not healthy. It was at this place that the Emperor Paul wished to form a Scotch colony; and if the project were followed up by the present Emperor, it would doubtless succeed, upon the liberal encouragement which he is known to give to foreigners, generally and individually.

Having renewed my passport and got my sledge repaired, I departed with the intention of visiting the ancient town of Yenisseisk, on the right bank of the river of the same name, two hundred miles north of this; and thence to have cut into the main road at Achinsk. Such was, however, the state of the roads that it was utterly impossible. I had much wished to visit the manufactories established in that place, especially those for working up sea-horse and mammoth teeth. A set of chess-men were presented me about three years ago, which go into the compass of one third of an inch square, consequently so small, that it requires good eyes to distinguish the pieces from the pawns. I had also some desire to see Yenisseisk, because it is one of the most antique places in Siberia, the old Russian style of building being still kept up, in which the roofs of the houses project twelve and fifteen

feet beyond the walls, and form a complete shelter. There is besides another curiosity there, which is famed all over Siberia. This is a massive silver candelabrum, suspended from the centre of the church; its weight is one thousand pounds, and its value above five thousand. The advanced state of spring, and the badness of the roads, prevented my visiting it, and I continued on the straight route.

The road to the first station was so bad that we changed horses twice, nor were the following stages much better, the first entirely without snow, and the others with too much. I reached the Black River with a broken sledge, the road so hilly and full of ruts, that from the heavy falls we got I expected to be laid up; the concussions were dreadful, and I never suffered so much in my life. Sometimes while going at the rate of ten miles per hour upon a smooth and level road, the vehicle would be pitched to a distance of six or eight, and over a perpendicular fall of two feet, nearly killing the horses with the shock. In such a state I reached Achinsk, which, from a large village when I was here before, is now become a small town. Its local situation at the junction of the Achin and Tongouska is valuable. On reaching the village of Bogatova the country becomes better cultivated and more picturesque. The heavy rains which it is subject to, do great damage, frequently inundating the country as far as Kemchouga. The en-

try into the government of Tomsk is equally miserable with that of Yenisseisk, nor are the roads any better. To add to the misery of its appearance I met two gangs of convicts, about three hundred in number, journeying to a long home. Foxes, however, and good sables, with wild goats, abound in the two governments.

At Birricoule the incivility of the landlady of the house in which I was quartered called forth the exercise of my powers. She was determined to afford me no assistance nor civility, even denying me her habitation, as she expected the Captain Ispravnick that day. Having arrived the first, and knowing that by law I was entitled to the best quarters in the village, I did not feel inclined, particularly on account of my wife, to give up the point, her abode being really comfortable and clean. I therefore persisted, telling the lady, at the same time, that I only wanted a little milk which I would pay for. This declaration had such an effect upon the poor woman that she became as interested to serve, as she had before seemed inclined to annoy me. She told me her expected guest would require something more substantial than milk, besides a twenty-five rouble note, or a skin of that value. The poor woman also confessed that she had paid the same sum not long ago, and was again prepared for the honour done her by this commissary.

My route lay over a level country, boasting numerous villages, but all bear the Tomsk charac-

ter, marks of much misery. There is a considerable quantity of fine timber about the country, before the city of Tomsk is approached. The prospect then becomes most dreary and desolate, presenting one boundless waste of brushwood covered with snow. I reached the city late in the evening, quite knocked up from fatigue and want of rest, although my wife still held on. To try my patience, I was kept waiting at the Police-office two hours before I was provided with quarters: into the first however, I could not be received, nor into a second which were pointed out to me, and upon my arrival at the third, I found them so bad as to be hardly habitable; perhaps I was getting too nice and delicate. At any rate they were so bad, as not to induce my staying a longer period than was necessary. I paid my respects to the acting governor, an excellent character, as also to Mrs. Illechefsky, wife of the late governor. In Tomsk, as in many other places, the acts of the new governor-general (for Siberia has now two governors-general, the eastern one commanding the government of Tobolsk, and Tomsk, with the chieftainship of Omsk, and the western one commanding the governments of Irkutsk, and Yenisseisk, with the chieftainships of Yakutsk, Okkotsk, and Kamtchatka) have created great disgust; among others may be mentioned, his conduct to the people working the brandy distilleries. The governor-general is General Kaptzevitch of the army, a man who dis-

tinguished himself in the late campaigns. His severity and rigid principles are not likely to gain him many friends in Siberia, as would be divined from his having actually ordered officers to receive so many blows, if the quantity of spirits extracted from corn were not more than doubled. Whether the general was right or wrong in the mode of increasing the revenue, or of making people do their duty, is one question—whether the officers and people employed did not make a pecuniary sacrifice to escape such humiliation, is another; but certain it is, the quantity of spirits is produced.

It is in agitation to remove the seat of government from Tomsk to a village not far distant, for what reason I cannot conjecture, as no seat of government is required to furnish more than the conveniences of keeping up the communication. Tomsk has already lost much of its population within these ten years; the district of Kolyma, which contains a population of one hundred and fifteen thousand, is now independent of it, and the new government of Yenisseisk has taken from it about sixty thousand, so that the patronage and pecuniary concerns of the governor of this province are greatly diminished. The number of inhabitants in the city is at present near ten thousand, which will shortly be reduced, as a great number will quit. There are one thousand eight hundred houses and twelve churches in the city, situate at the junction of the rivers Tom and Ousheika, one of the most

dreary and bleak situations in the world. A great number of Mohamedan Tartars reside in the city and contiguous villages, who are of the same caste as those of Kazan.

From Tomsk I departed for Tobolsk, that I might see the new governor-general, and as the road is one I have never been over, I shall be more particular in tracing and describing it. The first forty miles were over a fine road, the borders of which were lined with noble timber, such as birch and pine. There was some tolerable park scenery, but the country was generally flat. At the little romantic village of Tasheka I crossed the magnificent river Obe, where it was a mile wide. Thence my route, day and night, was continued over a most uninteresting low flat pasture plain, with here and there a few dirty villages. At one hundred and fifty miles I reached the village of Tchin, where I breakfasted with an old man, who was one of the first settlers upon the Barabinsky Steppe, under the auspices of Catherine. He remembered when bread was a halfpenny, and beef five pence, for thirty-six pounds, whereas they now sell at five pence and thirty pence; formerly also the people worked better, and not being the high road they had not so many drawbacks.

The road, as I proceeded, was crowded with caravans loaded with tea, silks, and furs, and I reached the town of Kainsk in good time to breakfast. The road was good, but the country and villages bear

the most wretched desert appearance; no wood of any description is to be seen on the left bank of the Obe. I had crossed the Kainka before entering Kainsk, which is a neat town standing in the centre of a low brushwood forest. There are six hundred houses and two thousand five hundred people. The three chiefs who command it appear to have placed it in a flourishing state. In the town are several handsome brick edifices, a well stocked market and clean streets, but there was not the least bustle or noise, save that of tolling a solitary bell for mass.

From Kainsk I directed my steps towards Omsk, having understood that the governor-general Kaptzevitch had left Tobolsk for that place. The central part of the Barabinsky Steppe presents a good deal of cultivation, which increased as I reached the western parts of it. Horses, goats, sheep, and cows appeared very abundant. The soil is considered so fine, that it resists the cold in a more than ordinary degree. Bears and wolves abound in the neighbourhood, and approach the villages so close, as often to alarm the people. Hogs, fowls, ducks, and geese are seen running about the villages, in all of which there are several farm yards. Considering the northern situation of the Barabinsky Steppe, the excessive rigor of its climate, which forty years ago was deemed uninhabitable, and the various obstacles which opposed agriculture, it cannot be denied that great praise is due both to

the government and the colonists. At present, probably there is less danger in traversing it than any other part of the Russian Empire; though the inhabitants in general do not possess so much of that kindness for which the Siberians are celebrated, most of them being schismatics from the Greek Church, and descendants of those sent hither for colonisation by the Empress Catherine.

Having been hospitably entertained by the commissary, with whom I had previously been acquainted in Tumen, I departed for Omsk, and before I had proceeded ten miles on my journey, the Cossack left me to pass his time in a gin shop, and I continued on without him; but, by buckling a pair of horses to a slight sledge, he succeeded in overtaking me. Terror was depicted in his countenance, for he was conscious of having rendered himself liable to severe punishment. He turned out a worthless drunkard, but I pardoned in preference to punishing him. The first half dozen villages, which are very well built and clean, contain five or six hundred inhabitants each. The road being very fine, we were enabled to reach Voznesensk, ninety miles from Kainsk, in twelve hours. Many people are stationed on the road and employed, as contractors on account of government, to buy up the next year's corn, which begins already to get dear, owing to the demands for the support of the garrison of Omsk and the people of Tobolsk. There were also on the road several persons bound

to the new government of Yenisseisk from the wilds of Ishim. They are principally Poles, and on account of the government offering lands free of taxes for twenty years, are removing to more fertile places.

I turned off from the Barabinsky Steppe previous to my reaching Tara, and took the direct route to Omsk; a route which I found it difficult to traverse, being so narrow that the horses were obliged to go, as it is called in this country 'goose-fashion,' one after another. The sledge I had was also too broad for the road, and frequently threatened to upset, though this could do us little injury, the depth of the snow being such that half a dozen horses could not have removed the vehicle from such a situation. The point where the road branches off is also the line of demarcation between the governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk, and is formed by the large and neat village of Yelanka, which contains one thousand five hundred inhabitants. I felt extremely gratified at reaching the government of Tobolsk, which appeared to me, even on the frontier line, to be inhabited by a more civilized and generous race than that of its eastern neighbour. The lands were certainly in a better condition, being stoutly and neatly fenced in, at least along my route, which was on the right bank of the Om. The only picturesque spot, however, on the road to Omsk, was at the village of Tavalganka. Here I halted for some time at the abode of an old man

who maintains a couple of Kirguiss, if possible in a more miserable state than my fancy had before painted them; for here they were in a frost of 32°, worse than half naked, yet in that state compelled to work hard for their bread. I reached Omsk on the third day, and put up at my old quarters.

CHAPTER XVI.

Omsk — Tou-Kalan—Ishim — Tobolsk — Kamishloff — Mr. Major's establishment—Ekatherinebourg—Billimbay-Zavod —Bissertskaya Kreposte—Kungour—Perme—Okhansk — Kilmess-selti—Malmish—Kazane—Tchebokssari—Vassil-- Nischney Novgorod — Bogorodskoye — Paulovo — Vladimir — Moscow — Klinn — Tver — Torjock — Vishney-Volotchock — Novgorod — St. Petersburg.

My first duty was to wait upon his Excellency the governor-general Kaptzevitch, to whom I had the pleasure of being known in Kazan. I was received as usual, and every attention and kindness were renewed to me by my old companions. My passports were also renewed, a public order was given for every legal assistance to be rendered me, and I again prepared to start. Omsk appeared, like most places in Siberia, to have undergone a considerable change, for the streets are kept clean, the gaps are all filled up with new houses, public buildings have been erected for many of the chief officers, a cloth manufactory has been established and is already at work, and the lame, blind, deaf and dumb are employed in it; the streets are no longer traversed by the begging poor, and a more military air pervades the town than formerly; more of real justice is administered along the whole line of demarcation, and consequently more general satisfaction and tranquillity prevail.

I attended an examination of the young Cossacks, three hundred and fifty in number, and, considering their ages, thought them very well advanced in reading, writing, and arithmetic; the senior classes have also made considerable progress in drawing, fortification, algebra, mathematics; and one, a distinct class, in the art of surveying, with the view of being employed to survey the whole of Siberia. They are well clothed, fed, and lodged, at the expense of the Emperor; as are also the sons of the soldiers of Siberia, of whom there are one thousand in the Lancasterian school, which system is still laudably persevered in, and with complete success. Omsk has of late been erected into a vice-government, and consequently a Chancery Court, and trade, will be established there independently of Tobolsk.

After two days' stay, I departed from Omsk, and soon reached Tou-Kalan, a place which I well remembered as being that where I lost my passports and papers: this village has also risen to the rank of a town. Thence my route lay towards Ishim one hundred miles from Omsk. Upon the road I had a difference on a point of etiquette with a young officer who was going thither. The road was so narrow, and both our sledges so broad, that it was impossible to pass without one of them being upset into the snow. Presuming on his rank as an officer, he ordered my Cossack and driver to pull up out of the path and let him pass. My Cossack, though

told that he was an officer, refused to obey until he knew his rank, and finding that he was a lieutenant and consequently *only noble*, desired him to make way for *most noble.* The young gentleman, being pressed for time, and rather head-strong, drove on as near the edge of the road as possible, and his sledge coming in contact with mine, was most completely turned off the road into the snow: his situation was truly laughable, as he was obliged either to unload it or remain until the melting of the snow would allow his proceeding. I wished him a pleasant journey, and resumed mine.

The road to Ishim was in a bad state, the country very dreary, yet there is some fine wood to be seen. It was now Lent and I could get little to eat but salt fish. This was a circumstance I had not calculated on, but there was no remedy nearer than Tobolsk. I supped at a regular eating-house, where money is demanded, being, I think, the third instance of such an occurrence in Siberia. The landlady had that day given her daughter in marriage to a young farmer, and had also benefited her son by giving him a wife at the same time. It was ten o'clock when I arrived, and though the custom of Siberia is to turn out of the best room and make place for a visitor, yet I was willing to allow of this, and supped in the kitchen, which was decidedly the best part of the house; for the principal room where the new married couples, their father and mother, and three younger children, in all nine people, slept,

was, from the warmth and horrid smell, scarcely possible to be borne. I asked the old lady how she could think of celebrating nuptials at such a period of the year, it being Lent; her answer, I do not recollect.

There is some tolerable park scenery north of Ishim, which in my idea was much improved by the numerous wind-mills at work. They are the first I have seen in Siberia, and extend along the road from Omsk to Tobolsk. The peasants are here very industrious and economical, but the lands are sterile and consequently produce but little bread, which is sold at ten pence the forty pounds, while meat, of which there is a great abundance, from the excellence of the pastures, is only thirty pence the forty pounds. The people are, however, so really Russian, that they cannot do without bread, cost what it will. Many of them are, in consequence, removing to the new government of Yenisseisk. I passed through several Tartar villages, willingly partaking of their homely fare, though more for the comfort of a blazing fire which is always burning on their hearths. I treated the wives with tea, who, however, respect the presence, not only of their husbands, but of any other male, too much, to partake of it without their previous consent. These Tartars are a most obliging and hospitable race, who cheerfully obey the commands of the government, and hardly ever go beyond the village which borders on their own. They are become

excellent agriculturists, and the women employ themselves in weaving a strong sort of carpetting, which they convert to counterpanes, blankets, and bed carpets. Their dwellings are clean and neat, not unlike a common guard-room; they have no chairs or stools, and live principally upon horse flesh, and are all Mohamedans of the Kazan tribe. Upon reaching the environs of Tobolsk, what with hard work and worse roads, we lost a horse, which by law I was obliged to pay for, as it was the shaft horse; the sum was twenty-five roubles, or one guinea. As I neared the city I observed my Cossack constantly drunk, and it turned out that he had sold all my copper cooking utensils, the loss of which I had not discovered in time, as we could get nothing upon the road to cook. Two more gangs of convicts were passed before I entered Tobolsk, which was late in the evening, when I was instantly provided with as good quarters as I could desire. The cold was so intense that the Cossack who had fallen asleep from liquor was severely frost bitten.

Tobolsk has undergone little or no change since I left it, unless it be in its governor, and a similar change has taken place within one year, in every government and province, except Okotsk. I passed three pleasant days with my friend Mr. Hedenstrom, the same who travelled across the Icy Sea. I also renewed acquaintances with old friends, and except that the society is less pleasing and more

reserved, I observed little difference. The present governor and governor-general are unmarried men, consequently have little inducement to have females at their houses. A certain air of pride and severity also prevents so good an understanding as ought to subsist, and which, under the auspices of the late governor did subsist, in this city.

Tobolsk is a more regular and compact built city than Irkutsk; it contains one thousand eight hundred and seventy houses, eight thousand males, and ten thousand females, besides the military and Cossacks, and is consequently larger than Irkutsk. It boasted also the presence of a very young and pretty English woman, in the person of a Miss Norman, who is going to educate the children of the governor of Krasnojarsk; her accomplishments and amiableness duly fit her for the task, but her beauty will much expose her where she is going; so that she must shortly either marry well, or return to her family.

I quitted the city of Tobolsk escorted by a dozen friends, who with bottles of champaigne accompanied me a few miles, when I parted with them, and following the great road, reached Tumen the next day, one hundred and seventy miles. It is a flourishing and well built town on the Toura, and carries on considerable trade by water. I quitted it for the last station in the government of Tobolsk, and with a grateful heart bade adieu to Siberia, which commences at Tumen; Ekatherinebourg is

dependent upon the government of Perme, although actually in Siberia, if the Ural Mountains divide Europe from Asia.

The road thence was crowded with vehicles of all descriptions, and there was an air of cheerfulness on the countenances of the peasants, which I had not seen for some time; they were busy in getting in hay and straw. The villages are now better peopled, and occur at every three and four miles: indeed every thing tells me I am leaving the wide spread and desolate regions of northern Tartary, for the populous, civilized, and industrious ones of northern Europe. Yet I did not feel elated at leaving a place where I had been happier than in any other part of the world. Travelling all night I reached Kamishloff, a considerable town containing four hundred houses, and fifteen hundred people. Many new brick buildings, and much improvement has taken place, in consequence of the active exertions of the town major, who had formerly treated me kindly. To Ekatherinebourg are eighty miles, the last twenty of which are barely passable, from the dreadful state of the roads. Never was I more truly thankful that I was able to exercise my pedestrian powers, than on the present occasion, but what to do with my wife was a difficult and serious question. She was however compelled to walk to avoid greater suffering. The roads are full of cross ruts four and five feet deep, and the fall of the vehicle in them was such, as made it impossible to

remain in it; and from the concussions I received, I felt seriously alarmed, not only at my own state but for that of my better half. It is the approaching fair of Irbit that renders the road so bad, owing to the many thousands of heavy laden vehicles passing to and fro, and which, occasionally halting, sink into the snow, and thus make the road full of ruts. By dint of labour and patience, we reached fourteen miles in twelve hours, halting at the hospitable abode of Mr. Major, which we reached at midnight. A good supper and hearty welcome were in attendance, and I then got what I more wanted, a sound sleep.

I staid two days with this gentleman who is an Englishman, brought up in the Birmingham trade, and who, had he possessed the least economy, must have saved a large fortune, as the numerous good employments he has held under the crown, as well as under the most wealthy individuals, sufficiently prove. He has an excellent heart with a speculative and inventive genius. At present he is engaged in the direction of the salt works of the Countess Strogonoff. New steam-engines are to be erected by him, and he is to receive thirty thousand roubles per annum, besides a per centage upon the saving effected by the adoption of steam; he is also employed in completing a machine which he has invented for the more easy and better washing of the gold sands, and which his estate is said to abound with. He shewed me, however,

as a sample, all the gold he had collected, and which is certainly not worth seven shillings. His estate is sandy, yet produces some extremely fine pastures and large woods; it is of several square miles, and was given him in perpetuity by the emperor. Mr. Major has also received from the same monarch, diamond rings, orders, crosses, and pensions too numerous to mention. The employment of steam in the working of the mines near Ekatherinebourg, is owing to the ingenuity of Mr. Major, who has also established on his own premises a manufactory of knives, forks, scissars, and cutlery of all descriptions. Should he succeed in getting a Siberian market, and should he be able to produce articles of worth, which, however, I much question, he will no doubt realise a large fortune in his old age. I have brought a four-bladed penknife to England, which is sold at nine-pence, or seven shillings and six-pence the dozen. It lasted well to mend one pen, and since then must be ground or set, to enable it to cut a second. I might have said to Mr. Major and others—

> So many irons in the fire you hold,
> That none of them methinks will turn to gold.

I left his amiable and hospitable family, and proceeded on to the city of Ekatherinebourg, which I reached in the morning. I waited upon the new chief, who has been here two years: he is well spoken of, as having the good of the service much at heart, although his manners are eccentric, and

he is no friend to society. He was several times in England, and is, no doubt, a man of talents. He has increased the quantity of gold produced from the washing of sand, from six hundred to two thousand pounds weight, which is equal to an increase of the revenue of Ekatherinebourg of near one million and a half of roubles. There have lately been some valuable gold mines discovered on the eastern and western ranges of the Ural mountains; the richest specimens are found on the east, and those in the lands of a Mr. Yakovleff, are the best: and that gentleman, whose liberal and magnificent establishments I have before noticed, has entered into a contract to supply the Mint with two thousand pounds weight of gold per annum, at a certain price, for a certain number of years. This is indeed a serious undertaking, but I doubt not it will be made good. Government are also about to commence working some newly discovered gold mines; and, it is said, a fresh assistance of six thousand workmen is to be sent from the college of mines at St. Petersburg, indeed, such are the inexhaustible riches of their mountains, that hundreds of thousands of people could be employed, and yet centuries would elapse ere they procured any great proportion of the hidden treasures, which are daily becoming more apparent, and which may ultimately vie with the mines of South America in the precious metals, and surpass them in the variety and beauty of their mineralogical productions.

Ekatherinebourg has considerably improved, but society has much fallen off, nothing but the low plodding Germans being left. It is, however, a flourishing and improving place, and will doubtless, ere long, be a most important one. I again visited the establishment of Mr. Yakovleff, and found the buildings increased by a handsome church, a large and well regulated hospital, besides a school where the director's children, as well as those of all the peasants, are brought up. Priests, doctors and schoolmasters, are severally provided for at the expense of the owner, and I have never seen a place, where philanthropy and good sense were more predominant, and where more general satisfaction beamed on the countenances of people termed slaves, than among the peasants of Mr. Yakovleff. Who will, after this, affirm that Siberia is only the abode of vice, misery, and ignorance?

I quitted Ekatherinebourg at midnight, and reached early in the morning Billimbay Zavod, near forty miles: the country was hilly. At break of day I was on the highest peak of the Ural mountain pass, and could not help stopping to take a last view of Asia, the forced residence of many dear and valued friends, as also the abode of others whom I much esteem. Though it is, generally speaking, the land of the exile, it is rather the land of the unfortunate than of the criminal. It is the want of education, which begetting a looseness of morals, plunges these unfortunates into error. The

thinness of population in Siberia, is a ready reason to account for the facility with which a person is exiled. Of real criminals there are not so many as is imagined, as by the report of Nertchinsk it appears, that but two thousand five hundred criminals are employed in the mines. It is not every man who is sent to Botany Bay that ought to be termed a criminal; nor is every one who is exiled to Siberia. It may be safely said that all the most hardened criminals who are banished for life, are at Nertchinsk and Okotsk; at least there are very few exceptions, and I believe their whole number does not exceed three thousand, while the number of exiles sent for a limited period, annually amount to at least one half that number. As to the education and moral habits of the natives of Siberia, they are certainly equal, if not superior in these respects, to that of the European Russians. They have not the same incitement, nor the same means of committing crimes. The whole population does not exceed two millions and a half, about one half of which are aborigines, scattered over a tract of country which gives to each person three square miles. Provisions and clothing are cheap, taxes are not known, the climate is healthy—and what can man more desire? I looked again to the East, and bade adieu, thankful for the many marks of esteem and kindness I had received from the hands of its hospitable people.

Descending the western branch of the Ural

Mountains, I soon found myself again in Europe: the land of malt, the fire-side home, again had charms for the traveller. The sensations I experienced upon quitting the most favoured quarter of the globe, were nothing when compared to the present. Then I thought I was going only to the abode of misery, vice, and cruelty, while now I knew I had come from that of humanity, hospitality, and kindness. I looked back to the hills, which are, as it were, the barrier between virtue and vice, but felt, in spite of it, a desire to return, and end my days. And so strong is still that desire, that I should not hesitate to bid adieu to politics, war, and other refined pursuits, to enjoy in Siberia those comforts which may be had without fear of foreign or domestic disturbance.

In the evening of my entry into Europe, I reached the village of Bissertskaya Krepost, situate on the Bissert stream. The road was bad, and over a hilly country, nor was my dissatisfaction at all allayed by the conduct of the Permians. Inhospitality, incivility, and general distrust every where prevailed, and influenced the conduct of the inhabitants; even the last copeck is insisted upon in payment for the horses, before they are permitted to commence the journey, a circumstance which in many cases occasions much inconvenience and loss of time. In Siberia the traveller may pay forward or backward three or four stations, and every sort of accommodation is given.

Immediately upon leaving Siberia, I had a most severe attack of rheumatism, or pains arising from the joltings I had formerly got; probably, also, the change of air did not agree with me, until I had again become accustomed to it. I however persevered in the journey, and passing a gang of Gypsies with their usual eccentricities, and a larger gang of convicts, I reached Kungour. The villages upon the road, are numerous and well peopled. Many iron and salt-works, as well as distilleries, are to be seen in all directions, and an active and industrious spirit every where prevails. Noble timber too is in great abundance, enlivening the prospect, among which the lofty oak is the most conspicuous. At Kungour a sort of hotel and billiard rooms have been established in my absence, and appeared to be doing well.

The picturesque situation of Kungour cannot fail to please, commanding a fine view of the surrounding well cultivated and better wooded and watered country. There are one thousand one hundred dwellings, and four thousand two hundred inhabitants in it; half a dozen churches, and some stone edifices give it a respectable appearance, yet as to thrift it is but a sorry place, although the honey it produces is considered as very superior and abundant. Formerly it was the capital of a province, and previous to that period, a favourite place of the Tartars. The caves where they resided, are still shewn in the light of useful curiosities, inasmuch

as they are converted into ice-cellars, and store-houses.

From Kungour to Perme are sixty miles, of at present most execrable, but during the summer of the most beautiful, road. I reached the city at midnight, exceedingly worn out. The police mistaking me for a horse, gave me a stable for a lodging; I was, however, satisfied with any place in my weak state, and with violent rheumatic pains. Perme, with two thousand houses and nine thousand inhabitants, is going on in an improving and handsome style of building. It is in short a flourishing place, and will in time become of great importance, and one of the most valuable governments in European Russia. It stands on the right bank of the Kama, in a fertile and well wooded country.

I procured from the governor a fresh passport, and was almost *obliged* to listen to his absurd and ill-timed questions regarding my wife—questions which evidently shewed his utter ignorance of his own country. Perhaps he suspected my wife was a Tartar, a Mongole, or some other sort of Pagan. He asked me of what country she was. I said, "of Kamtchatka." "Is she a Kamtchatdale?" "As much as you are a Russian." "Who and what is her father?" "He serves." "What is his rank?" "A priest." (A laugh, for he really does serve the church.) "But is he a Russian, or Kamtchatdale priest?" "As it may please the natives of

either country to attend the service." "Does he speak the Russian language?" "He does." "But is he a Russian or Kamtchatdale?" "Both." "How can that be?" "In the same manner, that you are a Livonian and a Russian." "Is he a *white man?*" "In appearance, but cannot answer for any few shades, by which he may be removed from a Tartar, or other tribe." "In what language does he read the divine service?" "In the Russian." "Oh, then he is of the Greek Church, and a Russian?" "Of course." "And your wife, where was she brought up?" "In Kamtchatka." "What has been her education?" "*To respect every body.*" "Well, I give you joy, said this governor, but I confess, I would rather you go to Kamtchatka for a wife than I." I told his Excellency, that "I thought it better to have such a wife as mine, who would go where I chose, and would consider it her greatest delight to do so, than such as his, who would neither accompany nor remain with him although in her own country." I need not say the conversation was abruptly discontinued, not a word being said, but merely adieu. This is the only instance, except one, that ever occurred to me in the Russian empire, of being personally insulted, and to the credit of Russia I should add, this governor is a German; the other was at Kazan, and regarded only the conduct of some young ladies, who, when at a ball, asked my wife who was her father, how many pea-

sants he had, &c. I told them, that I should begin also to interrogate them respecting their fathers, whether they gambled? and the consequence was, no more of those childish questions were again put by the young ladies; who were probably induced by a spirit of curiosity and vanity so congenial to young minds, to make such inquiries; while in the other instance, namely, that of the governor, I could only impute it to a want of delicacy, arising from ignorance.

I had little inducement to remain longer in Perme than was necessary, but I could not, from my weak state, depart before the noon of the second day of my arrival, during the whole of which time my wife and I continued the inhabitants of the stable—but such a fact did not in the least discompose me. I felt thankful I was so well off, and probably enjoyed it from other motives. Having departed I soon reached the neat little town Okhansk, on the left bank of the Kama, upon which my route had lain. It has much the appearance of a fishing place, from the number of vessels, of from fifty or sixty tons to as many pounds, with which it is crowded. Snow fell very heavily, and my postilion, whom I had procured at Tobolsk, suffered much from the melting of the snow, followed by a hard frost. I proposed an extra sledge for the night to relieve him, but such is etiquette, that the postmaster would not give extra horses either for love or money—so much for the government of Perme, and

which I here quitted for that of Kazan, over desperate roads, with a more desperate increase of rheumatic pains. Yet I was content to persist in moving forward in consequence of the attention of all classes of people to my wants. In the early part of the evening I reached the village of Kilmesselti, in the government of Viatka, having come through a well peopled and well cultivated country. On the noon of the following day, I reached Malmish, one hundred miles. The road was better, the villages more numerous, and all having a principal residence belonging to the lords of the lands, which I considered the first good visible sign of my having reached European Russia.

Malmish is a small neat town, with a growling postmaster, in spite of whom, ill as I was, I continued my route, and reached Kazan the next morning at seven o'clock. The last two stages I was obliged to go upon an open sledge, as I could no longer endure the heavy falls of my own, and so ill was I that I considered the palpitation of my heart as a short prelude to dissolution. It was fortunate my journey by the winter road was to end at Kazan. I could not have gone farther, and should therefore have been compelled to have staid two or three months in a village, unprovided with necessaries, much less with comforts. It was not, however, upon my immediate arrival at Kazan, that my difficulties were to cease, I was kept at the police office for two hours, awaiting the arrival of the

police-master. As he had not at that time arrived, the officer in waiting was kind enough to order me to comfortable quarters, which, when I had reached, I was not allowed to enter, as the police-master sent a Cossack to say he had better quarters for me in a more convenient part of the city. I returned to the police-officer, and was then directed to quarters already occupied. I again returned to the police-office, and was ultimately, as in Perme, sent to a stable. Even that was a happy situation for me in the state in which I was. I managed to call upon a governor, whose functions had ceased, and represented the case, which he, from prudence upon his own account, could not interfere in; although he is a worthy man, and had shewed me many marks of attention upon my outward journey.

I dined with this governor the next day, and at his house met Mr. Yeremeoff, whose wife was the governor's niece, and had become both wife and mother in my absence. I drank tea with her, when Mrs. Cochrane was taken so alarmingly ill, that she could not be removed. Mr. and Mrs. Yeremeoff kindly and good-heartedly insisted upon our removal from the stable to their elegant mansion, the resort of the first society of Kazan, the owner being a pattern of liberality and honest sentiments, his lady, a woman as accomplished and elegant in her manners, as she is virtuous and humane in her heart. For twenty-three days was my wife confined to her room, and for more than that time I suffered a spe-

cies of torturing pain in the heart and left side, which only left me from lapse of time. The names of Paul and Liuboff Yeremeoff will ever be engraven on both our hearts.

It was the inattention and disrespect of the police of Kazan, now dependent only upon their own whims, which procured me such a comfortable residence. The police, at the best periods, was very bad, owing to the difference which generally subsists between the lords, or land-holders, and the governors. Thus, Kazan is considered as one of the most difficult places to manage in the Russian empire; from what cause I know not. The nobles still retain their ancient Asiatic pride, in spite of their poverty, nor did they appear to me to have profited so much in general knowledge as might have been expected, considering there is a university; I was certainly quartered in the house of the most liberal and enlightened of them, descended from an ancient Russian family, who had previously served in the army, had travelled, and understood several languages.

Thus arrived at Kazan, it was necessary to remain until the Volga should become passable. The ice had broken up, and was rushing with a tremendous roar towards the Caspian Sea. All around Kazan was, as it may be termed, a universal deluge. The southern hills and the city alone, appearing above water. Boats might be seen passing to and from different parts of the town, while with others,

no communication whatever could be held, from the depth of the mud in the streets, or the velocity of the two canals which run through it. The country round is picturesque at this season of the year, May 1st (13th). The southern hills in particular have a fine effect. The Volga has now assumed a most gigantic size, and appeared to threaten a general inundation.

The insalubrity of Kazan has been already noticed: it has been, not inaptly compared to an Italian city, healthy only in wet and dirty, and unhealthy in hot and dry, weather; but Kazan is also unhealthy during the severe frosts. My time was variously occupied, as I enjoyed the friendship and society of the best classes of the inhabitants, and never felt more at home. I was under many obligations to the vice-governor, but received not the smallest marks of condescension from the governor-general, or rather senator, whose name is Simionoff, and who has since been employed in surveying and examining the newly discovered gold mines at Ekatherinebourg, in company with my learned and highly valued friend Dr. and Professor Fuchs. The latter is, I believe, about to publish a history of Kazan, a task for which his long residence and knowledge of the Tartar language especially qualify him. Many pieces of his have already found their way into the literary gazettes of St. Petersburg; among others, the description of the four annual feasts of the Tartars of

Kazan, and a delineation of their manners, customs, origin, &c. The Professor has also given to the world many useful hints upon the coins and medals of Kazan, of which he himself possesses a valuable and rare collection, besides some Tartar manuscripts. His situation, as one of the Professors of the University, gives him a great advantage, and it is to be hoped he will do much to solve the doubtful and intricate history of the towns of Kazan and Bulgari.

The latter city, about eighty miles from Kazan, stands in a fertile and rich plain, which still boasts some interesting monuments of antiquity. The wall which encompassed the city is still traceable, and is four miles in circumference. At present a small village and church occupy a part of the site, the gardens being actually spread over a bed of human bones. I have seen some able drawings of the remaining monuments in the collection of Professor Fuchs.

The needful preparations being made for my departure, such as purchasing a new kibitka, procuring passports, laying in a stock of provisions, and bidding adieu to all friends, I set out, and crossing a ferry of six miles over the Volga, against a NW wind, reached the first station safe. My baggage and horses did not arrive until near midnight, when we crossed two more ferries, the face of the country being scarcely visible from the flood. Next evening I reached Tcheboksssari, on the right

bank of the Volga, having come over a fertile and beautiful country, tolerably well peopled, who were as civil and obliging as could be desired. Many extensive tanneries and tallow refining places are in the neighbourhood. Tchebokssari has eight hundred dwellings, and three thousand inhabitants, besides two conspicuous monasteries; its situation is romantic, and it has a considerable trade; it is, notwithstanding, a dirty place.

From Tchebokssari the road was very bad. I crossed a difficult ferry on the Soura, from the town of Vassil, and thence on to Nishney Novgorod, where I arrived at sun-set. The theatre had just closed, and I consequently met the most of the wealthy people returning from it. The view of Nishney Novgorod from a distance of ten miles has a fine effect, the country is well cultivated, and I enjoyed the beauty and richness of the landscapes. I procured lodgings at a regular hotel, and waited upon the governor, but was again so unfortunate as not to meet his amiable English wife. The buildings for the new fair have increased rapidly, and have a handsome appearance; still, however, I feel far from convinced of their durability or safety from the encroachments of the river Volga. Many extra precautions, at a considerable expense, have been taken since I was last here, and the direction of the works have been taken from General Betancourt, and given to the Prince of Wirtembourg. Whether his Highness is a bet-

ter engineer, I know not, but he does not bear that character perhaps unjustly. The bank on which the fair stands has, in many places, been raised twelve, and in some eighteen feet. The church, theatre, hotel, government-house, guard-house, chancery, and public offices, are handsome structures.

There are two thousand seven hundred shops, which, when let, will produce seven hundred thousand roubles per annum, while the expenses have already amounted to seven millions of roubles, and it is supposed will require at least two more. The erection has most materially altered and benefited the appearance of Novgorod, which now contains thirty thousand inhabitants; it is paved, kept clean, and well policed, at least the upper town is. My old Spanish acquaintances were still at work, and although a little discontented at the fall of their patron General Betancourt, were still doing well, and grateful to Russia.

From Nishney Novgorod, I continued my route and reached the large and handsome village of Bogorodskoye, belonging to the Count Sheremetieff. There are in the neighbourhood many villages belonging to the same young nobleman, as also several residences ready for his reception. This young Count is not only the richest subject in Russia, but is comparatively the richest in the world. He has one hundred and sixty thousand peasants, and a revenue of not far short of three

millions of roubles. The village of Bogorodskoye contains nine hundred dwellings and five thousand inhabitants, the situation is fine and the country well wooded ; and such is the face of the country all the way to Vladimir where I arrived at noon. I had passed the large village of Pavlovo containing three thousand houses and fifteen thousand inhabitants, also belonging to the Sheremetieff family. Many iron manufactories are to be seen at work, and the country is highly cultivated. Numerous populous villages, all having a handsome villa, in a dilapidated state, attract the attention of the traveller. Mourom, Monacovo and other small towns are in the same condition, and the only difference I observe is the increased impudence of the post-masters: in some places I was exceedingly provoked with their extortion.

This conduct of post-masters is one of the greatest nuisances in the Russian Empire, and is in some measure imputable to the government. A traveller arrives at a post-house, procures horses, and is about to depart, when an officer also comes upon service and takes the horses from the traveller. It often happens also that a traveller arrives with a passport and order for horses, and although there be plenty, the post-master will not give them under fifty per cent. increase—this is the hard case in which civilians, and people not in the service of the Emperor, are placed. Government have punished several offenders, but the law and

custom of procuring horses is bad. Why should not individuals be allowed to hire their own horses, without being subject to the compulsion of engaging them from the post-contractor? Speaking of the post, it may not be unamusing or useless to inform my readers, that to send a letter from one part of the Russian Empire to the other, the postage must be paid in advance—a circumstance which appears to me to keep back education more than any thing else. There is a great difference, I presume, in paying to send a letter of the contents of which a person is acquainted, and paying for the receipt of a dozen letters coming from a parent or friend. It is said that many false letters would be sent by the ignorant and mischievous; this indeed might at first be the case: but let them be sent, they will thus become educated, and in the end will know better how to employ their time.

The road from Vladimir to Moscow is a bad one, being a continual causeway. It rained hard, and my cart being leaky, the journey was exceedingly unpleasant. The approach to Moscow not a little exposed the absurdity of the belief that the approach towards civilisation is the approach to happiness. The people more surly, the articles of life dearer, no hospitality, voracious appetite for gain, innumerable beggars, roads crowded with vehicles of all descriptions—such are the sure signs of approaching a capital, and such was the case as I entered Moscow's crowded streets, and put up

at the London Hotel; which I recommend no one else to do—from its expensiveness, and the inattention and want of cleanliness of its owners. My stay in Moscow occupied me three weeks, there being no spare places in the Diligence which has been lately established upon a liberal and successful plan. The custom or patronage it has received from the public is unbounded, and the outfit is already repaid to the speculator.

I was most hospitably entertained by my old friends, and by several of the nobility. I attended the opera and theatre, and paid visits to the numerous magnificent villas in the neighbourhood of Moscow, which are well worth the attention of the traveller, and forcibly reminded me of old England. I also visited the new walks and gardens of the Kremlin, and consider them as very handsome. The experimental farm which has lately been established by the Moscow Imperial Society of Rural Economy, and which is much patronized by the nobility of Russia, has met with success; its present President, governor-general of Moscow, Prince Wladimir Golitzin, is a man of great merit and spirit, and it is now under the management of a Mr. Rogers. I also visited the public prisons which are conducted according to a plan suggested by the lamented Howard. They are far superior to those of the new capital: fifteen hundred prisoners are confined in them, seventy-five of whom are criminals.

The governor-general's late noble residence was destroyed by fire the last winter, and has not yet been repaired. The anecdote respecting it will be long remembered in Moscow. It was at a grand ball, and when the tables were already laid for supper, that the fire was discovered. It had long been seen by the watchman, but he could not think of giving the alarm or disturbing the quadrilles and waltzes. When it was known, the company had barely time to escape before the drawing-room floor fell in, carrying with it the supper tables already covered with the usual delicacies and ornaments.

Among the most conspicuous personages in Moscow was Lieutenant Holman of the royal navy, a poor blind knight of Windsor. I passed several pleasant days with him, and considered the accomplishment of my design of penetrating through Siberia as nothing when compared to his determination of proceeding also. He related to me many anecdotes of his travels and *second sight.* What object he can have, without a servant, in going to Siberia I know not. He, indeed, may go there as well as any where else, for he will see just as much; but there is so little to be seen by those who have even the use of their eyes, that I cannot divine what interest he can have, to attempt it without even a knowledge of the Russian language. If his journal which may be made interesting, be composed of hearsay, as it certainly cannot be of ocu-

lar evidence, he will indeed have enough to do to record the information he may receive, and which can only proceed from exiles or criminals, and consequently not implicitly to be relied upon, particularly situated as he is, possessing hardly sufficient knowledge of the Russian language to duly appreciate the value of such hearsay information. His manuscript must become voluminous, and, of course, too bulky to be sent by private hands; it can only, therefore, be forwarded by the post, where, without doubt, it will be subject to the examination of those whose duty it is to inspect documents of such a nature as this is likely to be, and will be treated according to its merit.

In every country, even in England, we find that foreigners should be careful of what they do, as well as of what they write, if they wish their packets a safe arrival to their destination; they should take care that nothing offensive to the government be inserted; for, frequently, as in England, truth is a libel, and the greater the truth, the greater the libel. Whether Mr. Holman has already learnt this useful, and, to travellers, necessary lesson, time will develope; if so, he may go where he will, and be received by every person in the empire with open arms and warm hearts. I gave him letters of introduction to all my friends in Siberia, and shall feel most happy in his return. Who will then say that Siberia is a wild, inhospitable or impass-

able country, when even the blind can traverse it with safety?

Having seen Mr. Holman safe upon his road, under charge of the Cossack who had accompanied me from Tobolsk, I took my place in the diligence for St. Petersburg, in company with a Mrs. Bradford, widow of an English purser of the navy, and a Lieutenant Read, of the Royal Marines, besides a young man under my charge from Kazan, in ill health. I regretted quitting the hospitable and friendly society of Moscow, which, in my opinion, is superior and more refined than that of its sister capital, and which, probably, arises from the circumstance of its being exclusively inhabited by Russians, many of whom, after having filled with credit and honour the first offices of the Empire, retire to Moscow, there to pass the remainder of their days in peace, tranquillity, and good society, as that capital is much more free, independent, and unshackled by the police than St. Petersburg. In Moscow observations are openly made on any unpopular act of the government; its senators have a very superior voice, and great attention is paid by the ministers to their representations. The nobility of Russia possess very extensive privileges and power, and if the government must be called a military despotism, it is a well regulated one, and happy are the people, when it is governed, as now, by a prince as unambitious as he is humane.

It is true, that its immense standing army, near a million of men, in the hands of a prince differently inclined, would be a terrible engine of destruction, as well of the lives as of the liberties of Europe. The power of Russia is still more formidable when it is considered that the army is composed of hardy, bold, enterprising, and needy men: who, go where they will, must be better off either as to climate or productions, than at home. The present military expenses amount, I understand, to two hundred and fifty millions of roubles per annum, a sum almost equal to two thirds of the revenue, for an army far surpassing what may be deemed truly necessary in times of profound peace; the expense of which will be considerably diminished, if what I have heard be correct, viz. that three hundred thousand men are to be reduced.

Leaving this matter for more able politicians, I resume my journey in the diligence, in which I reached the handsome town of Klinn, and remembered the portal in the church where I had slept upon my outward journey. We reached Tver the next day, averaging about five miles and a half per hour. Having purchased of the people at Torjock, some few articles of leather, such as embroidered boots, shoes, and gloves, we continued an uninteresting route, staid at Vishney Volotchok to dine, and then entered upon the high road, which is M'Adamizing, and will, when finished, be a most beautiful one, which three more years will be re-

quired to complete. Passing through Valdai, I again enjoyed the beauty of the scenery, the lake, and the insulated Iverskoy monastery. I reached Novgorod, crossed the river, and passed close to the new military colonies, of which the city of Novgorod, as I was told, is to become the head-quarters. The experiment of this new system, will be only extended to the peasants belonging to the crown, and the chief objects expected to arise from it are, first, the cheap maintenance of a large militia force in times of peace; second, the replenishing of the regular armies, when war shall demand it, by a people already accustomed to military manœuvres and the use of arms; and lastly, the doing away of the old feudal custom, which hitherto has been pursued, of recruiting the armies from the peasants of the nobility. The two last considerations will enable the Emperor of Russia to equip a better and a more numerous army, and in less time than could formerly have been done; yet, notwithstanding these favourable considerations, especially to the possessors of peasantry, and the advantages, in a pecuniary point of view, to the empire, much apprehension has been expressed of the dangers likely to arise from putting arms into the hands of the common people, and thus giving them an opportunity of forming intimate connexion with soldiers. The compulsory manner in which these peasants were forced into this new militia service, met, at first, with considerable objection,

and, in some cases, with resistance; but I believe the disobedience did not continue long, at least I have heard nothing to the contrary. The unpopularity of the measure, perhaps, is not singular, and arises from the fact that most new systems begin by being equally unfortunate: Count Araktcheef, according to Dr. Lyall, is the author of it. His Excellency is certainly one of the most confidential advisers of his Imperial Majesty, as well as powerful noblemen of the present day; but whether in this case his Excellency's advice will ultimately prove beneficial or injurious to the Russian Empire, time only can develope; certain however is it, that still the measure is badly received. Novgorod has, no doubt, benefited by the proximity of the colonists, as also have the numerous villages in its vicinity.

We reached the environs of the capital about sun-set, and safely arrived at the ill-attended, dirty, and extravagant hotel of Mrs. Rea. I thought, however, that a few days of uncomfortable lodgings was no hard case to me, whatever it might be to others, and therefore, I would not remove. Mr. Page's is, beyond all question, the best, most respectable, and in the end the cheapest hotel in St. Petersburg, from which I had been absent exactly three years and three weeks, and to which I had returned in infinitely better health than when I left it.

I was soon engaged at all sorts of dinners and entertainments, but was too anxious to get a pas-

sage by ship to the land of malt, to allow my accepting them. I engaged the cabin of the Peter Proctor, the master of which ship had, on that day three months, dined with my father in Dominique, and left him in health and happiness: this news was a gratification I did not expect to experience so soon. The vessel being to depart with the first fair wind, I had but time to pay my respects to the Count Kotchoubey, my friend and protector. I tendered to his Excellency my journal, offering to leave it in Russia, should his Excellency desire it. The Count said, "No, take it to England, publish the truth, and you will do more good than fabricating or inventing things which do not exist. Tell the people of England how you have been treated in Russia, but at the same time let us know what you have seen." I left his Excellency, who was on a sick bed, penetrated with the highest sentiments for his virtues and affability, and paying my respects also to Sir Charles Bagot, and Sir Daniel Bailey, I completed my official reports at the court of St. Petersburg—with the exception of one to the governor-general, Count Miloradovitch, respecting my passport, which was granted immediately, upon my own terms. It seems that a late smuggling transaction, carried on at Cronstadt, has involved several English merchants, as also Russian officers, who are by birth English. Many people who got passports to depart, have gone, leaving very large debts unpaid; consequently, the Governor-general made a rule that any English-

man, about to quit the empire, should give information three times in the gazette, and also lodge securities for any debts. I represented my anxiety to depart, and that the ship would sail in a few days, or the first fair wind. I was provided with a passport on the spot, and thus received the last act of kindness which it was possible to bestow.

Sir Charles Bagot did me the honor to mention many kind enquiries on the part of his Imperial Majesty, in my absence, respecting me, which do honour to his heart and human nature, and at the same time increase the many obligations I am under to his Majesty, who has my heartfelt gratitude. Such is the reward, to me invaluable, for all the troubles and difficulties I may have endured upon my long journey. The Emperor had frequently in my absence enquired into my pecuniary situation, and as often made a tender, through Sir C. Bagot, of any assistance I stood in need of, which I was bound to decline in consequence of my being every where received in such a manner, as to almost render money unnecessary. His Imperial Majesty also frequently expressed a fear that I should not be able to surmount the difficulties incident to a voyage of the kind; in short, that I should not again reach Europe safely.

CONCLUSION.

I was not a little flattered, to learn from Sir Charles Bagot, personally, as well as by letter, that no part of my conduct had met with the smallest disapprobation from the Russian government. My object had been to avoid the rocks and shoals which travellers usually split upon, and while with the natives, I studied to accommodate myself to their manners. I uniformly ate, drank, and slept with them; dressed in the same way; bore a part of their fatigues, and participated in their recreations, and, I hope, made myself an acceptable, instead of a disagreeable guest.

If I have morally erred in my wanderings, I am sorry for it; I am unconscious of any harm done to any one, and if, in these pages, I have said more than was prudent or necessary, it has proceeded from a desire to tell the truth; if, in telling that truth (which ought not always to be told), and in drawing comparisons, I have incautiously hurt any individual, I shall deeply regret it. There is, however, so little of interest in Siberia, so little to be seen, that it is hardly possible to form an interesting work on that topic, unless the traveller be a botanist or naturalist, or otherwise versed in the mysteries of science. Siberia is, in fact, one immense wilderness, whose inhabitants are so scattered, that five and six hundred miles are passed

by the traveller without seeing an individual, much less any cultivation, or any works of man at all worthy of description. The manners, customs and dress of most of the inhabitants are the same. The severity of the climate is in most places co-equal, and in general productive of the same results. The matter of interest is to be compressed in a small space, and all that I may be said to have done, may consist in the fact of shewing others, that man may go where he chooses, as long as his conduct corresponds with his movements, and that he may fearlessly and alone as safely trust himself in the hands of savages, as with his own friends. I do not say the same thing for a party of travellers, I adhere to my idea stated at the commencement, and I think I should often have not only been without food, but have run the chance of being starved, had I been accompanied by only two or three attendants more than I had.

If this narrative of my journey shall have the least beneficial effect in any way, if it prove of the least service in guiding the future traveller, and the better preparing him for the evils incident to a journey of the kind, I shall be gratified, and consider my time as not thrown away. Experience has taught me many things I knew not, and which at first view may appear frivolous; but I am not one of those, who insist on the necessity of using great foresight—that foresight has a tendency to beget timidity or distrust. In my apprehension,

he is the wisest and most successful traveller, who goes at once into his journey, dependent only upon the reception which the ignorant and brutal will *give him*, in preference to that traveller who relies upon a well lined purse. I feel convinced, that compassion is the leading characteristic of what are termed barbarians, and that man, in a state of nature, will freely give to the distressed that bread which he would not sell for money. I am confident that man is really humane, and that he gives more from the dictates of a good heart, than from ostentation. I have received food from a family who were almost in a starving state, and am therefore justified by grateful experience, in affirming that those people who are the most ignorant, and uncivilised, are the most hospitable and friendly to their fellows.

Should my readers concur with me in this opinion, as deduced from the facts I have stated in this journal, they will not regret to have devoted a few hours to its perusal: which I hope will be much facilitated by the assistance of the maps annexed to this work, and the which I hope will be found even more correct, than could have been expected, considering the limited means I possessed, and with these sentiments I conclude this narration.

THE END.

G. Woodfall, Printer,
Angel Court, Skinner Street, London.

Map
of the EASTERN PART of
SIBERIA,
and the Peninsula of
KAMTCHATKA,
Compiled from the latest Authorities.
This line describes the route of Capt. Cochrane.
FROZEN OCEAN
N. AMERICA
GIGANSKOI COMMISSARIAT
UPPER VILLUISK COMMISST.
VERKOANSK COMMISST.
AMGINSKA COMMISST.
KOLYMA COMMISSARIAT
COUNTRY of the TCHUKTCHI
GULF of ANADYR
SEA OF OKOTSK
Mouths of the Lena
New Siberia
Kettle I.
YAKUTSK
Okotsk
Gulf of Pengensk
Nishney Kamtchatka
Verkney Kamtchatka
Bolcheretzk
St. Peter & St. Pauls
C. Lopatka
Prince of Wales
According to Andreef, who reached this part in baidares in 1763, this Land is called Tikigen & inhabited by a race called Tkhaing